

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 18 1977
DATE ENTERED JUL 27 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Herndon Hall

AND/OR COMMON

Phase 2

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2000 Grand Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Des Moines

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

STATE

Iowa

VICINITY OF
CODE

COUNTY
Polk

CODE

153

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

C.J. Feldmann

STREET & NUMBER

2000 Grand Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Des Moines

VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Polk County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Des Moines

STATE

Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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 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

Herndon Hall is a large and elaborate city mansion set in spacious grounds along Des Moines via triumphalis, Grand Avenue. It is a superb, almost prototypical of the residential Queen Anne.

The house is irregular in both plan and elevation. In overall plan, it is an essentially square mass, to which is joined a subsidiary service wing at the southwest corner. The roofscape -- indeed, the whole house -- is dominated by an enormously high hipped roof, the ridge of which, with delicately wrought metal finials and cresting, defines the main axis of the house. The roofscape is interrupted by high-peaked gables, oriel/dormers, and towering brick chimney stacks, elaborately panelled and corbelled, and the roof ridge of the service wing, which meets it at right angles.

The front facade retains an essential symmetry, and is dominated by a composition of peaked gables and a pediment. The pediment of the porte-cochere stands far in advance of the two gables, and defines the main entrance of the house. The gables rise side by side above the facade. Each is treated differently in terms of surface materials, window treatment, and a number of smaller pediments applied to the wall surface at various points reflect the larger pediments and complicate the composition.

The symmetry of the north facade is further dissolved on the east or the garden facade. The main feature is an elaborate gabled bay in the center, which stands in advance of the wall of the house block. On the ground floor this bay is polygonal in plan; the second floor features an elaborate window composition including window screens and panels carved in bas-relief. Under the vergeboards of the gable is tucked an oriel window. To the right of the gabled bay is an oriel/dormer rising just above cornice level. To the left is a second story porch.

The plan of the interior is organized by the axis of the main hallway, to which is set a cross axis created by music room on the east and parlor on the west, which gives into a large living hall, set off center and featuring huge fireplaces in both floors, and a 3/4-turn staircase in an open well. The main axis terminates in the dining room at the rear of the house. Behind the music room is a first-floor bedroom which plan-wise balances the living hall, but is well-secluded from the reception rooms. On the second floor are five bedrooms with dressing rooms, walk-in closets, and one bathroom. The third, or attic, floor contains an enormous ballroom. Around the periphery it is supported by a "colonnade" surrounding a hardwood dance floor.

A variety of materials were employed on the house, both exterior and interior. The basement is of red sandstone, first story is of Philadelphia pressed brick, and the second story is of frame construction, with brick infill faced with clapboards and shingles. The interior is finished in natural woods: the parlor, for example, in white maple; the music room in red gum, the halls in quarter-sawn white oak. Most of the rooms are wainscoted in woods of contrasting or complementary colors. Each room contains a large fireplace.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brigham, Johnson. Des Moines and Polk County, Iowa (2 vols). Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1911.
 Porter, Will. Annals of Polk County Iowa and the City of Des Moines. Des Moines: George A. Miller Printing Co., 1898.
 Greater Des Moines Committee. Des Moines Means Opportunity. 1907.
 SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	5	4	4	6	3	0	0	4	6	0	3	5	9	0
ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING								

B

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Samuel Klingensmith, Architectural Historian; M.H. Bowers, Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Division of Historic Preservation

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

B-13 MacLean Hall

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Iowa City

Iowa

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

Adrian A. Anderson

TITLE

Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

5/11/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

~~DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION~~

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles A. ...

DATE

5/27/77

DATE

7-28-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Removal of an extensive veranda from three sides of the house has had the greatest impact of any of the exterior alterations. The chimneys have been considerably shortened, and the porte-cochere rebuilt as an entrance porch. The porch on the southeast corner has been closed in to serve, in part, as a secondary staircase to the second floor. Minor changes include the removal of some roof cresting and the closing-in of the middle panel of the tripartite window located on the second floor, east pavilion.

The house was used as a private residence by the Polk family from its construction until 1912. In that year, the building was transferred to the Diocese of Des Moines (in exchange for a \$20,000 gift to Mercy Hospital (administered by the Diocese), and an agreement by the Hospital that certain beds therein would be maintained for the "needy poor") and served as the Bishop's residence until 1948. From that year until its purchase in 1972 by the present owner, the house was owned by the American Farmers' Mutual Insurance Co.

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Polk's vision extended beyond the city of Des Moines alone. In 1898 the Des Moines City Railway incorporated the Inter-Urban Railway Co., the beginning of an ambitious project designed to make Des Moines the hub of a rail system reaching all directions through central Iowa. Like the spokes of a wheel, rail lines were planned, and many built, to Valley Junction, Colfax, Fort Des Moines, and further to Boone, Fort Dodge, and Ames. These tied directly into the city railway system to give Des Moines "undisrupted commercial control" over a wide area.

Another of Polk's successful projects was the "Greater Des Moines Movement". At a meeting of the Commercial Exchange in 1889, Polk first proposed the union of Des Moines and the suburbs through annexation. During the next decade, eight such suburbs were brought within the city limits, substantially expanding the city with concomitant economic and administrative benefits. Hardly coincidentally, Polk's street railway system was ready to circle into these newly-acquired areas, bringing them promptly into the urban network.

Jefferson Scott Polk died in 1907, a social and business leader of considerable prominence. Had his career ended in 1880, Polk would have been just another shrewd lawyer of the type which dominate 19th-century local histories. But Polk was a visionary, and his efforts to realize some of his visions had a lasting impact upon Des Moines.

¹Luther L. Hill, Jr., "Squire of Herndon Hall", The Iowan, Winter 1973, p. 20.

Bibliography, cont.

Pierick, Judi. "Tale of Two Mansions". The Iowan, Winter 1973, pp. 15-19.

Hill, Luther L., Jr. "Squire of Herndon Hall". The Iowan, Winter 1973, pp. 20-22.

Carlson, Norman (ed.). Iowa Trolleys. Chicago: Central Electric Railfans' Association, 1975.

Polk, J.S. and Julia H. Polk. Shadows and Memories of Herndon Hall. Des Moines: Kenyon Press, 1901.