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DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 1 6 1977

DATE ENTERED JUL 27 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN <i>HOW</i> TYPE ALL ENTRIES			3	
NAME				
HISTORIC				
Herndon Hall				
AND/OR COMMON				
Phase 2				
LOCATION				
STREET & NUMBER				
2000 Grand Avenue		NOT FOR PUBLICATION		
CITY, TOWN		CONGRESSIONAL DISTR	ICT	
Des Moines	VICINITY OF	Fourth		
STATE JOWA	CODE	COUNTY Po1k	CODE ノケご	
CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESI	ENT USE	
DISTRICTPUBLIC	XOCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM	
$X_{\text{BUILDING(S)}}$ X_{PRIVATE}	UNOCCUPIED	X.commercial	PARK	
STRUCTUREBOTH	_WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDE	
SITE PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS	
OBJECTIN PROCESS	XYES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC	
BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATIO	
	NO	MILITARY	OTHER:	
NAME C.J. Feldmann STREET & NUMBER				
C.J. Feldmann		STATE		
C.J. Feldmann STREET & NUMBER 2000 Grand Avenue	_ VICINITY OF	STATE Iowa		
C.J. Feldmann STREET & NUMBER 2000 Grand Avenue CITY TOWN				
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CONDITION

_DETERIORATED

 $\underline{\underline{\mathsf{X}}}$ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

X_ORIGINAL SITE

__GOOD __FAIR

XEXCELLENT

__RUINS
__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 paln, 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 durther 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 "colon-nade" 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-sawed white oak. Most of the rooms are wainscoted in woods of contrasting or complementary colors. Each room contains a large fireplace.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION	
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE	
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE	
1600-1699	X_ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
_ 1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER	
<u> </u>	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	XTRANSPORTATION	
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		INVENTION	•		
SPECIFIC DAT	ES 1881	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT T.A. Roberts, a	rchitect	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Foster and Liebbe, construction and supervising architects

Herndon Hall is an exceedingly fine example of Queen Anne architecture, with a number of interesting design features. Its first owner, Jefferson Scott Polk, figured prominently in the late 19th-century development of Des Moines as an urban center, primarily through his pioneering work in urban transportation systems, and also through his concept of city growth which resulted in the "Greater Des Moines Movement" to annex immediately adjoining suburbs.

The house was designed by New Jersey architect T.A. Roberts. The designs and plans furnished by him were carried out by the local construction firm of Foster and Liebbe. In this house, an overall formal organization was imposed, in the plan of the main reception/entertainment rooms, and at the elevation of the main facade. Private rooms and less important facades were then irregularly arranged and composed around this formal armature. The decoration of the exterior is of very high quality, and relatively constrained, given the opportunities offered by this style for exaggeration.

Jefferson Scott Polk (1831-1907) came to Des Moines from Kentucky in 1855, nine years after the cession of west and central Iowa by the Sauk and Mesquakie tribes became effective. At that time, the town had about 1000 inhabitants, "no mercantile businesses, no manufacturers, no place for speculation".1 Although unimpressive at first sight, a growing settlement was an ideal place for a young lawyer beginning his career: after 25 years, three law partnerships, and the establishment of the Equitable Life Insurance Company, Polk had amassed a considerable fortune, materially displayed in Herndon Hall (named for his wife, Julia Herndon).

For the next 26 years, J.S. Polk devoted much of his energy and fortune to the development of a high-quality system of privately-owned, public transportation in Des Moines. The first street railway was established in 1866, followed by a number of competitors using both broad- and narrow-gauge track. Among them was Polk's own Rapid Transit Co., which in 1888 obtained the first city permit to use steam (rather than horses).

The competition among street railway lines, although true to capitalist ideals of opportunity and free enterprise, tended to result in disorganized and unreliable service. As a first step toward ameliorating this problem, Polk in 1889 acquired the Des Moines Street Railway, Broad Gauge Railway, Sevastopol Street Railway, and the Beltline Railway (which served suburban areas). Under Polk's guidance the newlyformed Des Moines City Railway converted all lines to standard gauge and electrified the entire system. Another innovation was the installation of mail drops in each car: letters were posted therein at any street crossing, and were then deposited at the post office when the cars arrived at the central station.

MAJOR BIBLIOGR	APHICAL REFE	RENCES	
Brigham, Johnson. De			vols). Chicago: S.J. Clarke,
1911. Porter, Will. Annals George A. Miller Pr Greater Des Moines Co	rinting Co., 1898. Ommittee. Des Moir	•	of Des Moines. Des Moines:
GEOGRAPHICAL I	DATA		
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		• •	
LIST ALL STATES AND	COUNTIES FOR PROPERT	TIES OVERLAPPING STA	ATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
FORM PREPARED NAME / TITLE Samuel Klingensmith ORGANIZATION Division of History STREET & NUMBER	n, Architectural Hi	istorian; M.H. Bo	DATE
STREET & NUMBER B-13 MacLean Ha11	l		TELEPHONE
CITY OR TOWN Iowa City		T	STATE Owa
STATE HISTORIC	PRESERVATIO		
	UATED SIGNIFICANCE OF		IN THE STATE IS:
NATIONAL	STAT	re	LOCAL X
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STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OF	FICER SIGNATURE	in 11. And	end
·· ·····			DATE 11/27</td
TITLE Director, Divi	sion of Historic P	Preservation	3////
TITLE Director, Divi R NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS			IISTER _ 1 _ 1
R NPS USE ONLY	PROPERTY IS INCLUDED	IN THE NATIONAL REG	3/11/1

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

7 PAGE 1

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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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 & 9 PAGE 1

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 ambitions 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 "undisupted 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 exapnding 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.

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

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