

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only  
received **APR 22 1983**  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic The Frederick A. Donahower House

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 720 South Minnesota Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town St. Peter N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Nicollet code 103

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Brian Michael and Martha J. Gottlieb

street & number 720 South Minnesota Avenue

city, town St. Peter N/A vicinity of state Minnesota

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Nicollet County Courthouse

street & number Minnesota Avenue

city, town St. Peter state Minnesota

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date July 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

# 7. Description

<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			N/A

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

The Frederick A. Donahower House is a two story brick residence executed in the Italianate style. It is situated on a prominent and spacious corner lot at the southern end of St. Peter's main business thoroughfare.

The primary materials utilized in the construction of the Donahower House are buff brick and limestone. The foundation is of coursed ashlar with a finished water table separating the brick of the main body from the foundation. Observation suggests that the structure is frame with an applied brick veneer.

In plan the residence is irregular, consisting of a higher frontal "L" with a lower rectangular rear appendage. The roof is a combination of intersecting gables and low hips. Porches are located at the front (east) and side rear (south) facades.

In terms of decorative treatment, the Donahower House is embellished by a dominant eave line supported by a combination of dentils, modillions, and paired brackets executed in scroll patterns. The paired brackets with intermittent modillions are repeated in the polygonal one-story bays on the east and south facades. Paired second story windows on these two facades are accentuated by ornate double wooden hoods with carved filigree, dentils and turned pendants. The remaining window hoods are executed in brick with stone keystones and are slightly corbelled from the facade plane.

The Donahower House has retained substantial integrity and is maintained in good condition.

# 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/
<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 checked="" 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** ca.1875                      **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Frederick A. Donahower House is significant for its association with Frederick A. Donahower, organizer and president of the First National Bank, and as one of the most visually distinctive residences in St. Peter.

Donahower, born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, on 16 September 1830, completed a rudimentary education before becoming a store clerk at the age of 17 in Reading, Pennsylvania. In 1851, he moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, and two years later moved to St. Paul entering the employ of private banker C.H. Parker. During this period, Donahower, under Parker's direction, compiled the first set of abstracts for Ramsey County. In 1855, Donahower, left Parker to become a teller for Mackubin and Edgerton, a private banking firm in St. Paul.

In May of 1857, Donahower moved to St. Peter, a city founded three years earlier on the Minnesota River, and with E.S. Edgerton and Alva Smith founded a private bank. During this same time Donahower, initially with H.M. Ketcham and later with C. Amundson, operated a general merchandise store until 1887. In 1871, the private bank of Edgerton, Donahower and Smith organized into the First National Bank and Donahower was appointed cashier, a post he held until his selection as president in 1889.

At the time of his retirement in 1914, after serving as president and chief executive officer, Donahower was credited with the establishment and management of a bank which not only weathered the financial panics of 1857, 1873, 1893 and 1907, but actually increased capitol holdings during the uncertain economic periods.

In addition to his banking interests, Donahower is considered to be one of the persons influential in organizing the construction of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion and serving terms on the Nicollet County Board of Commissioners, City Council and School Board.

Donahower died in his home in February, 1917, at the age of 86. His house, which is located on a prominent residential lot on St. Peter's main thoroughfare, is an excellent example of the Italianate style dwelling popular with business people who constructed their homes to reflect their position in the community. Although, not generally flamboyant in appearance, the house is a significant and accurate reflection of Donahower's steady and substantial contributions to the financial well being of St. Peter from its earliest settlement to after the turn of the century.

(see continuation sheet)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See continuation sheet - page 2)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre  
Quadrangle name St. Peter Quad, Minnesota

Quadrangle scale 7.5

### UTM References

A 

1	5	4	2	3	4	0	0	4	9	0	7	6	6	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 and 5 of Block 182  
Amended Plat of St. Peter

### 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 Susan Roth, Research Historian and Charles Nelson, Historical Architect

organization Minnesota Historical Society date February 22, 1983

street & number Fort Snelling History Center telephone 612-726-1171

city or town St. Paul state Minnesota

# 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 4/7/83

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 5/19/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service**

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Frederick A. Donahower House, Nicollet Co., MN

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

St. Peter was one of several river towns to be founded along the Minnesota River during the 1850s. The earlier building stock of these communities contrasts with that of the "railroad" communities of south central Minnesota, many of which weren't founded until the later decades of the century. The integrity and detailing of the Donahower House mark it as one of the most distinctive Italianate houses of the Minnesota River Valley and it significantly defines the position of St. Peter during its early development.

<sup>1</sup>Doniver A. Lund, A History of First National Bank of St. Peter, Minnesota. (St. Peter Herald, Inc. St. Peter, 1967), p.24.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

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- The Book of Minnesotans. Ed. by Albert N. Marquis. Chicago: Marquis, 1907.  
"Death of Pioneer Banker," St. Peter Tribune, 28 February 1917.  
"F.A. Donahower," St. Peter Free Press, 3 March 1917.  
Gresham, William G., ed. History of Nicollet and LeSueur Counties, Minnesota.  
Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen, 1916.  
History of the Minnesota Valley by Rev. Edward D. Neill. Comp. by George E.  
Warner and Charles M. Foote. Minneapolis: North Star Pub. Co. 1882.  
Little Sketches of Big Folks, Minnesota 1907. St. Paul: R.L. Polk, 1907.  
Lund, Doniver A. A History of First National Bank of St. Peter, Minnesota.  
St. Peter: Herald, 1967.