

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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

For NPS use only

received MAR 6 1986

date entered

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

1. Name

historic JAMES TOMPKINS HOUSE

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 523 South State Street not for publication

city, town Appleton vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Outagamie code 087

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"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Frank G. Council

street & number 523 South State Street

city, town Appleton vicinity of state Wisconsin 54911

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Outagamie County Courthouse

street & number 410 South Walnut Street

city, town Appleton state Wisconsin 54911

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Wisconsin Inventory
title of Historic Places

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1977, 1985 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input 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 James Tompkins House is located in the city of Appleton, south of the College Avenue commercial district near the Outagamie County Courthouse. Situated on the northwest corner of State and Fifth Streets, the Tompkins House is a two-story Italianate residence. Its plan configuration is cubic with a rear addition, and the roof is a low pitched hip. The roofing materials are asphalt, the walls are double course concrete block, and the foundations are random stone. The rear addition is concrete block on the first floor and clapboard on the second. The concrete blocks used are 10 inches long, 5 1/16 inches wide, and 4 inches high with a hollow core. A materials analysis by Twin City Testing and Engineering Laboratories determined that the blocks consist of slaked lime and sand consistent with glacial deposits found in central Wisconsin and east-central Minnesota. The color of the blocks is pink-tan-grey below a coat of paint. The fenestration is informal and consists of large windows with concrete sills, coffered concrete window caps, and double-hung, single-paned sash. Large paired brackets adorn the soffit. The principal entryway is through double doors asymmetrically positioned on the front facade, accessed by a bungalow porch. The simple interior includes a central hall, flanked by a parlor and dining room. Behind these is a sitting room and former pantry, leading into the rear addition which served as the original kitchen. The second floor includes several bedrooms off a central hall. Converted to a duplex, the house retains much of its original woodwork.

A modern, (non-contributing) one-story garage is located to the rear of the property.

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 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 1868¹ Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The James Tompkins House is of local architectural significance as a rare example of mid-19th century concrete block construction.

ARCHITECTURE

The systematic application of concrete to construction did not take place in the United States until after the establishment of the artificial (portland) cement industry in 1871.² Earlier 19th century applications were largely limited to precast concrete blocks made with hydraulic lime and laid up in mortar like masonry. These blocks were solid like bricks and cast in wooden frames. In 1855 John Messinger of Milwaukee and A. Foster of Dodge County were issued a patent for the composition of a concrete block, but it is not known how actively they pursued the development of their patent.³ The first commercial manufacture of concrete blocks took place in 1868 by the Frear Stone Manufacturing Company of Chicago.⁴ These and other commercially manufactured blocks were turned out by metal presses with hollow cores. This later innovation produced a light, insulated, moisture resistant block that was cheaper than stone and stronger than brick. By the turn of the century concrete blocks presses were being commercially manufactured, engendering a wide application of concrete blocks until the end of their popularity in the 1930's.⁵ *

In 1868 James Tompkins built his Italianate residence with pink-tan-grey hollow core concrete blocks, the color similar to pink granite. While the Tompkins house is not known to be constructed of Frear blocks, the hollow core construction and intricately cast window caps are significant characteristics that suggest the advanced techniques of commercial manufacture. The Marcellus Pedrick House (NRHP 1976) built at Ripon about 1858 incorporates some of these same characteristics, but the concrete blocks used in its construction are not known to be the more advanced hollow core type. While the Pedrick house is one of several examples in Ripon, the Tompkins house is the only known representative of mid-19th century concrete block construction in Appleton.

James Tompkins was a native of New York who came to the Town of Greenville in 1849.⁶ After developing a prosperous orchard, Tompkins moved to Appleton in 1866 where he ran a soap factory and his daughters married prominent merchants. In 1868 he constructed his State Street residence in the cubic Italianate mode. It is one of five extant examples of this style in Appleton, the others being at 432 West Brewster Street, 421 Locust Street, 207 Green Bay Road, and 804 East South Street. All have undergone alterations and are constructed of more common building materials. While regrettable, the addition of the bungalow porch on the Tompkins House does not obscure the distinctive characteristics of its Italianate design.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Condit, Carl W. American Building: Materials and Techniques from the First Colonial Settlements to the Present. University of Chicago Press, 1982. Chicago, Illinois. Second Edition.
Ryan, Thomas H. History of Outagamie County, Wisconsin. Goodspeed Historical Association, 1911. Chicago, Illinois.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .25

Quadrangle name Appleton, Wisc.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot Five (5), Block Twenty-eight (28), GRAND CHUTE plat, City of Appleton, Outagamie County, Wisconsin.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey H. Mulvey & Peter J. Adams

organization Peter James Adams & Associates date 10/29/85

street & number P.O. Box 341 telephone 414/722-8963

city or town Neenah state Wisconsin 54956

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.

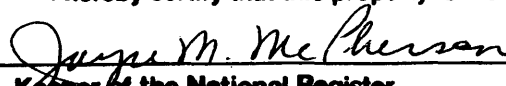
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title _____ date 2/2/86

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register date 4/3/86


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
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received
date entered

JAMES TOMPKINS HOUSE, Appleton, Outagamie County, Wisconsin
Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 1

- ¹ Appleton Crescent. August 8, 1868; page 3, column 4.
- ² Condit, Carl W. American Building: Materials and Techniques from the First Colonial Settlements to the Present. University of Chicago Press, 1982. Chicago, Illinois. Second Edition. P. 157.
- ³ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form; Marcellus Pedrick House, Ripon, Wisconsin, 1976.
- ⁴ Condit, p. 158.
- ⁵ Cotton, J. Randall. "Ornamental Concrete Block Houses." Old House Journal. Volume XII, Number 8. P. 180.
- ⁶ Spencer, Elihu. Pioneers of Outagamie County, Wisconsin. Post Publishing Company, 1895. Appleton, Wisconsin. P. 209.
- ⁷ Ryan, Thomas H. History of Outagamie County. Goodspeed Historical Association, 1911. Chicago, Illinois. Pp. 93, 1297. Appleton Crescent. July 4, 1868; page 3, column 4.

* Concrete block construction continued to be popular for structural and foundation applications, well beyond the 1930s.