

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



2

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

1. Name

historic George E. Schlapp House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 639 Avenue C not for publication

city, town Fort Madison vicinity of congressional district 1

state Iowa code county Lee code

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 type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Paul and Dorothy Peterschmidt

street & number 639 Avenue C

city, town Fort Madison vicinity of state Iowa

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office

street & number Lee County Courthouse

city, town Fort Madison state Iowa

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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 George E. Schlapp Residence, the most outstanding example of the Italianate mode still extant in Fort Madison, occupies a beautifully landscaped promenade overlooking the town below and the Mississippi River. Schlapp erected this magnificent two-and-one-half story structure in the early 1870's, and he and his descendants occupied it for nearly a century. The house consists of a rectangular (almost square) main block and a much smaller, two-story wing. The edifice is constructed of locally manufactured red brick with exterior and interior walls laid at a thickness of 23 and 13 inches respectively. Windows are of the tow-over-two wood sash variety and are set in rectangular surrounds that feature stone lintels and sills and workable wooden shutters. The house is capped with a hipped roof pierced by four symmetrically spaced interior brick chimneys with corbelled caps and a single inside end chimney stack on the east side.

The house boasts a variety of Italianate decorative detail. On the front (south) facade, first floor windows are floor length, and the front entrance is marked by highly decorative double doors with glass panels. Running the full length of the front facade is a one-story, flat-roofed portico, supported by carved wooden columns with ornate brackets and scrollwork and featuring a dentilled frieze and a plain overhanging boxed cornice. The greatest effect is achieved, however, by utilizing elaborately carved, paired wooden brackets and dentils under the eaves all around the house. These brackets and dentils culminate in an open triangular pediment on the front facade that features a single window set in a round arched brick surround. This house appears to have undergone virtually little exterior alteration over the years. Although there is a large flat area on the roof top, suggesting a "widow's walk," there is no evidence uncovered to date that shows such a feature was ever constructed.

On the inside, a central hall plan is followed with five rooms and one bath downstairs and five bedrooms and two baths upstairs. Except for the addition of modern plumbing and electricity and some relatively minor remodeling done by Schlapp around the turn of the century, the interior appears to have undergone little alteration. Most of the original woodwork, flooring, and hardware appears to be intact. Virtually all woodwork, including the insides of closets, has been grained to resemble a variety of woods. In addition the house contains some 2,000 pieces of furniture, rugs, china, crystal, paintings, books, and artifacts that belonged to Schlapp and his children.

The residence is attractively sited on land comprising two city block or 8.03 acres. Approximately 60 feet east of the house is a one-and-one-half story barn believed to be of similar vintage. Of wood frame construction, it is sheathed in vertical board-and-batten siding. The landscaping of this property is noteworthy as well.

There are over 70 healthy, cultured, major trees near the house area (56 coniferous, 16 deciduous), and many are over 100 years old. Coniferous species include Norway, Austrian, White, Ponderosa, Scotch, Eastern White, and Western

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED	JAN 5 1982
DATE ENTERED	FEB 4 1982

CONTINUATION SHEET

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White pines; Colorado Blue, Weeping, and Norwegian Spruce; Alpine and Balsam Fir; Northern White Cedar; and Red Juniper or Eastern Red Cedar. Among the deciduous species are the Silver Maple, Tulip, Magnolia, Black Walnut, Hard Maple, Pin Oak, Osage Orange, Locust, and a variety of ornamental fruit trees. The Tulip tree, which stands to the south, is the second largest recorded in Iowa (over 100 feet tall), and one of the Black Walnuts is among the largest ever recorded in the state. In addition to trees, there are numerous flowering shrubs, including ten very old groupings of lilacs. Most of the trees and shrubs here were planted by Schlapp and cared for by him during his lifetime.

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 checked="" 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates Approx. 1870-Present **Builder/Architect** George E. Schlapp

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The George E. Schlapp Residence is not only important as the best preserved example of Italianate architecture in Fort Madison, but because it is the only extant structure associated with one of the town's leading industrialists and entrepreneurs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. George E. Schlapp was born in Germany on November 27, 1839. When he was twelve years old, his family immigrated to the United States and by 1853 they had settled in Lee County. By 1858 George had entered the brewing business, and in 1866 he erected a large two-story brewery on Front Street in Fort Madison, which was demolished only a few years ago. In 1871 his brother Henry joined him in the business, and the firm became known as George Schlapp and Brother. In addition to operating his flourishing brewery, George Schlapp played a prominent role in the construction of the Fort Madison Western Narrow Gauge Railroad. In addition he was a stockholder and director of the German-American Bank in Fort Madison.

In October 1863 Schlapp married Mary Dupuis, also a native of Germany, and eventually they had six children. The exact date they built their house on Avenue C has not been determined. Scattered surviving tax records first list the residence in 1875, but most likely it was constructed a few years earlier. Schlapp lived in this house until his death from cancer in 1912, and his funeral services took place in it as well. The house and its grounds remained in the Schlapp family until the present owners purchased it in 1968.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Fort Madison Weekly Democrat, November 20, 27, 1912.
History of Lee County (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1879).
 Sanborn Fire Map, Fort Madison, Iowa, 1884, copy in Division of Historic Preservation files.

~~UTM NOT VERIFIED~~
~~ACRES NOT VERIFIED~~

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approx. 8 acres
 Quadrangle name Ft. Madison Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	1 5	6 4 2 9 5 0	4 4 9 9 4 0 0	B	1 5	6 4 3 0 8 0	4 4 9 9 4 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 5	6 4 3 0 8 0	4 4 9 9 5 7 0	D	1 5	6 4 2 9 5 1 0	4 4 9 9 5 7 0
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Out Lots Eleven Hundred and Two (1102) and Eleven Hundred and Two A (1102-A), in Ft. Madison, Iowa.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph J. Christian, Architectural Historian
 organization Division of Historic Preservation date January 9, 1981
 street & number 26 East Market Street telephone 353-6949/353-4186
 city or town Iowa City state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Alvin A. Anderson*

title *Director* date *12/18/81*

For HCERS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u><i>Delores Byers</i></u>	Entered in the National Register date <u><i>2/4/82</i></u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	