

United States Department of Interior
National Park Service



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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ebert, Rudolph and Louise, House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	199 East Division Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Fond du Lac	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Fond du Lac	code 39 zip code 54935

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alicia L. Cowe
Signature of certifying official/Title

February 1, 2002
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Ebert, Rudolph and Louise, House
Name of Property

Fond du Lac
County and State

WI

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
___ removed from the National Register.
___ other, (explain:)

Edson A. Beall

4-1-02

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

[Signature]
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

- private
___ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
___ district
___ structure
___ site
___ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources
in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
2	0 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
2	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property
listing.)
N/A

**Number of contributing resources
is previously listed in the National Register**
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
Foundation stone
walls weatherboard
roof concrete
other wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Section 7 Page 1 Ebert, Rudolph and Louise, House
Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac County, WI

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Rudolph and Louise Ebert House is a museum-quality transitional Queen Anne style house that sits on a spacious corner lot in a large residential area of Fond du Lac, a medium-sized city in east-central Wisconsin. The Ebert House is located east of the city's downtown commercial district in part of the city's large historic east side residential area. This area of the city developed primarily during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the construction of both large and modest-sized houses in the Queen Anne, Period Revival, American Foursquare, and Bungalow styles for both prominent, middle and working-class families. The intensive development of the east side residential area began after some houses were built during the mid-nineteenth century. These early homes were built primarily in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles, but also included some Gothic Revival and Second Empire style houses.

The Ebert House is located in the most prominent historic period neighborhood of this area. East Division Street is filled with large, fine old homes on mostly medium to large sized lots. In fact, in a 1992-completed intensive survey of Fond du Lac, much of East Division Street was suggested as a potential historic district. All of the houses in this part of East Division Street have similar setbacks and sit on lots that are landscaped with many mature trees and shrubs. East Division Street is an average-sized urban street with improved concrete curbs, gutters and sidewalks. The street is wide enough for parallel parking on both sides and there are wide terraces between the sidewalks and the street. Mostly large, mature trees landscape the terraces, interspersed with smaller trees that are replacements for older trees that have been removed. The topography of the area is generally flat.

The well-manicured lot of the Ebert House features several mature deciduous trees scattered within mature lawn areas. Surrounding the house on three sides is a pruned arbor vitae hedge and small arbor vitae shrubs line the brick walkway from the sidewalk to the front entrance of the house. Around the south, east and west sides of the lot there is a decorative iron fence. On the north side of the house there is a wide brick driveway that leads to the carriage house, which is used as a garage. The carriage house sits to the northwest of the house, and directly to the west of the house is an octagonal gazebo, a reproduction of a late nineteenth century structure. Only the house and garage are included in the resource count.

Exterior

Built in 1892, the Rudolph and Louise Ebert House is a two and one-half story Queen Anne style building that has a massive, generally rectangular form with projecting elements that give the plan some irregularity.

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The Ebert House has a gable roof that is covered with modern cement tiles that replicate a slate tile roof. These tiles also cover the towers, dormers, and the front porch. The roof slopes sharply down on each side elevation where the eaves are returned. The entire house sits on a cut limestone foundation. Punctuating the foundation walls on each elevation are small, rectangular openings. The walls of the entire house are covered with narrow clapboards that have a beveled edge that adds texture to the wall surfaces. At the corners of the house are plain cornerboards and a plain cornice defines the first and second stories on all of the elevations of the house.

The main elevation of this house is made up of two halves that are mirror images of each other. Twin two-story towers with pent roofs project from each end of the elevation. These massive, curved towers have identical details. On the second story of each tower is a Palladian inspired window that is made up of a single light with a fanlight flanked by two single-light, double-hung sashes. Below these window groupings, in the first story of each tower, are tripartite windows consisting of single lights topped with transoms and flanked by narrow single-light, double-hung sashes.

Between the corner towers is a dormer that projects from the roof. This gable-roofed dormer has a full pediment supported by two fluted brackets flanking two multi-light openings. On the second story there are two openings filled with single lights. A small balustrade is set in the first story porch roof, suggesting a balcony in front of these windows. The porch roof itself is slightly curved and its ends flare to the center of both towers. At the center of the porch roof, under wide eaves, is a pair of brackets. Supporting the porch roof are two Ionic columns sitting on clapboard-covered balustrades. A wide flight of steps with a limestone balustrade leads up to the porch and to the main entrance of the house. Because the original porch had been removed prior to this owner's renovation, this porch was built based on historic photographs and the overall style of the building.

The main entrance is decorated with an elaborate oak frontispiece. The frontispiece has a double entablature divided by a cornice. Above the entry door and extending into the entablature is a sunburst decorated with a wide, round molding. Flanking the entry door is a set of fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals. Identical pilasters flank the wide sidelights that sit on panels on each side of the entry door. The entry door, itself, is a paneled oak door with a decorative leaded and beveled glass panel. Similar glass panels fill the sidelights.

The main feature of the east elevation of the house is a two-story, three-sided bay. This bay has a crenellated roof that suggests a balcony because it sits in front of a Palladian window. The Palladian window is made up of a group of single lights with a transom of vertically divided

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lights topped with a deeply inset fanlight. The round arch that decorates the fanlight is accented with a tall, narrow keystone. The openings in the second story of the bay consist of a large single light with transom flanked by two single-light, double-hung sashes. Flanking the second story of the bay are two large oval lights with large tabs. The first story of the bay has an identical opening of a large single light with transom flanked by two single-light, double-hung sashes. To the south of the first story bay windows is an additional single light sash, and to the north is a shorter bank of four openings that wraps around the northeast corner of the house. Making up the window bank are four casements filled with leaded glass panels. The window bank is decorated with two small, round pilasters and a larger round column accents the corner.

The rear or north elevation of the house has two large dormers projecting from the roof. These dormers have full pediments and each dormer has a set of two vertically divided openings. Projecting from the first story of this elevation is an enclosed porch. It has a flat roof that is encircled by a balustrade of plain posts. Behind the porch roof on the second story there is a large opening consisting of a door flanked by large single-light, double-hung sashes. To the east of this opening are two smaller single-light sashes. Small sashes also flank the porch on the first story. The porch is enclosed with large lattice panels decorated with fanlights, a recent addition.

The west elevation of the house features a Palladian window in the gable peak. The window grouping is made up of a round arched-sash flanked by two vertically divided single lights. In the second story, there are three openings: a medium-sized single-light, double-hung sash; a pair of smaller single-light, double-hung sashes; and an oval window with large tabs. The first story of this elevation includes five single-light sashes of varying sizes.

The exterior of this house has been extensively restored to a museum-like condition over the past 20 years. Until 1981, the house still had a covering of wide aluminum siding that obscured most of its details. After the siding was removed, the clapboards and wood trim were restored and replicated, where necessary. The original front porch had been enclosed and its original details removed, so the current porch was restored based on old photographs and the style of the house. The rehabilitated porch was completed in 1999. The only other alteration on the exterior is the enclosure of the rear porch.

Interior, First Floor

The first floor has a central hallway plan with a parlor and living room on one side of the hallway and the dining room, kitchen and pantries on the other side of the hallway. The lavish décor of the interior is classically-influenced with many details adorning each room. Behind the main entrance is a vestibule that has an oak floor, oak paneled wainscoting and plaster walls.

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Below the ceiling, there is a border of classically-detailed lincrusta wall covering¹. The lincrusta in this area, and throughout the house, has been painted by the current owner. All of the lincrusta borders have white backgrounds, but the raised details have been accented with slightly different color schemes in each room. In the vestibule, the border has a swag and ribbon motif colored gold with red accents. Oak moldings trim the exterior door and sidelights.

The foyer is reached through another entry door that is similar to the main entrance. It includes a heavy oak paneled door with a panel of leaded and beveled glass. The door has unusual strap hinges and is decorated with fluted oak pilasters, a narrow transom, and two large sidelights, filled with etched glass. The sidelights sit on oak panels and are framed by narrow fluted pilasters. In front of the sidelights are two period steam radiators.

The foyer has an abundance of oak paneled wainscoting and plaster walls and ceiling. The lincrusta seen in the vestibule is repeated in the foyer. There is also a painted mural at the back of the foyer near the entrance into the back hallway of the house. The floor in the foyer is covered with oak boards and the room is further decorated with a built-in hall tree and a seating area with one of the numerous fireplaces of the house. The built-in hall tree sits between the entrances to the parlor and living room. It consists of a lower panel with an opening for umbrellas and an upper panel for hanging garments; it is decorated with a carved crest at the center.

Across from the hall tree is inglenook, framed by two oak fluted pilasters. The sitting area is covered with oak paneling and there are two oak benches facing each other on each side of the fireplace. The fireplace, itself, has a facing of dark pink slate tile, and there is slate tile covering the hearth. The mantel has a plain oak shelf supported by two simple brackets attached to the oak paneled wall above.

To the right of the foyer are the entrances to the parlor and living room. The parlor is located at the front of the house and partially sits in the tower, so its south wall is curved. Different wood was used for the trim in each room of the house. In the parlor, the wood trim is walnut and this wood is used for the trim around doors and windows, the baseboards, the fireplace, and the half of the pocket doors on the parlor side. The floor in this room, as in the living room behind it, is maple and is accented with boards laid in a diamond and pyramid pattern.

¹ Lincrusta is a permanent wallcovering coated with a wood flour and linseed oil mixture on a paper backing. The covering is molded rather than printed, resulting in a raised surface. While the exact date of the wallcoverings in this house is unknown, they are assumed to be part of the original décor of the house. The lincrusta is clearly visible in photographs of the house taken in the 1950s. (The photographs are in the possession of the current owner.)

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The walls and ceiling of this room are covered with plaster. The ceiling has a delicate raised plaster floral border decorated with yellow roses. Like the foyer, there is a lincrusta border under the ceiling that is accented with a picture molding. The lincrusta has a white background with a raised swag and ribbon decoration colored gold with red accents. The trim around the doors and windows consists of paneled stiles and entablature cornice moldings decorated with beaded trim.

The fireplace of the parlor is also classically detailed. It has a facing of marble with a ceramic tile hearth in a dark gold color. The rest of the fireplace is encased in walnut paneling and this material makes up the overmantel. The fireplace is decorated with Ionic pilasters, brackets accented with acanthus leaves, egg and dart moldings, bead and reel moldings, and beaded edges. Also in this room is a large period cast iron radiator.

The living room sits to the north of the parlor and is reached through a set of large pocket doors that have walnut veneer on the parlor side and maple veneer on the living room side, since the living room features maple trim. The living room floor is like that of the parlor in its design features. The walls of the living room are a combination of plaster with maple-paneled wainscoting. A picture molding accents another border of lincrusta, which has a white background and a raised floral swag and scroll motif colored gold with red accents. The plaster ceiling is decorated with another delicate raised plaster floral border colored green with red roses.

The wood trim around the doors and windows of this room is similar to that of the parlor. It consists of fluted jambs and entablature cornice moldings with beaded trim. A heavy wood beam spans the middle of the living room ceiling. It is supported on each end by large, fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals. Built-in bookcases sit under the windows that flank the projecting fireplace along the north wall. Wooden benches are attached perpendicular to the bookcases. The paneled wainscoting acts as a back for the benches. Above the bench along the east wall is the bank of casement windows that span the northeast corner of the house. Along the west wall of the living room, there is a very decorative cast-iron period radiator.

The fireplace is encased in elaborate maple paneling, which also makes up the overmantel. The fireplace has a blue ceramic tile facing. A wood surround features thin fluted pilasters with acanthus leaf capitals and ellipses. At the center of the mantel is a wood carved swag flanked by plain pilasters.

On the opposite side of the central hallway of the first floor, is the dining room, kitchen, and the pantries. The dining room is similar in size to the parlor and includes a rounded south wall due to its location in the tower. Like the parlor and the living room, the dining room has plaster

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walls with wood paneled wainscoting. The wainscoting is trimmed with a beaded cornice molding. In this room, the wood used is oak, which includes the wainscoting, trim around doors and windows, and the floor.

Also like the living room and parlor, the dining room has a border of lincrusta located between the ceiling and a picture rail. In this room, though, the lincrusta is more elaborate, consisting of a raised repeating pattern of large wreaths decorated with ribbons, a beaded swag, and a fan and pendant decoration between the wreaths. The lincrusta has been painted with a white background with a gold color used for the raised decoration. The ceiling of the dining room also has a more elaborate raised plaster border than the parlor and the living room. It features a grapevine on a trellis motif in colors of purple, green, and dark red.

Along the west wall of the dining room is a built-in sideboard. The upper half of the sideboard consists of two three-shelf cabinets covered with leaded glass doors that flank an inset mirror under a round arch. The top of the cabinet has a beaded cornice molding. The lower half of the cabinet has three sections of drawers, a large group of drawers in the center flanked by two smaller, diagonal groups of drawers.

On the east wall of the dining room is a fireplace that is encased in oak paneling. The fireplace is faced with green ceramic tile, which also makes up the hearth. The mantel is made up of oak paneling. Large acanthus leaf brackets support the mantel shelf at the center. Above the shelf, which has a bead and reel molding, the center panel is decorated with large carved swags. Topping the overmantel is a cornice molding with dentils. All of the trim around doors and windows of the dining room have paneled jambs and entablature cornice moldings decorated with beaded trim.

An oak-paneled door leads into the butler's pantry north of the dining room. This room has tall, built-in, oak cabinets, with leaded glass doors covering the upper shelves and there are drawers of various sizes below. Behind the butler's pantry is the kitchen. The kitchen has plaster walls and narrow board wainscoting. The wainscoting is made up of an unusual curly maple that is also used for the doors and wood trim of this room. Taken out for modern cabinets, this wainscoting was put back by the current owners when the kitchen was restored to most of its original appearance.

The restored kitchen features period replacement fixtures and antiques. Also in the kitchen is the dumbwaiter, which is enclosed with the curly maple wainscoting. The wood trim around the doors and windows of the kitchen consists of simple raised moldings. The floor is covered with fir, as is the maid's pantry. Like the butler's pantry, the maid's pantry has banks of built-in

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cabinets fashioned out of the curly maple wood. They are similar in construction to those in the butler's pantry; the upper shelves have leaded glass doors and there are drawers of various sizes below. The wide plank pine floor of the maid's pantry is also seen in the kitchen.

The maid's pantry is smaller than the butler's pantry, because to the east there is a staircase to the second story and an entrance leading out of the rear of the house. This entrance was used as the "servants'" entry and the wood doors and trim around them are the same as seen in the kitchen. The Eberts entered the house via a separate entrance a little further east under the old porch that is now enclosed. This entrance has oak trim and classical moldings. The Eberts' entrance led into a small hallway that, through a door by the main staircase, led into the main hallway and foyer of the house. Along the small hallway by the Eberts' entrance is a small half bathroom that has reproduction "Victorian" fixtures and wainscoting that was salvaged from an old church building.

Main Staircase

The two-run, open-string, main staircase leads to the second floor bedroom area of the house. It is a wide staircase constructed entirely of oak. Opposite the staircase balustrade are plaster walls with oak paneled wainscoting. A painted mural decorates the plaster wall above the wainscoting along the first run of the staircase. The staircase balustrade is made up of spool turned balusters supporting a molded banister. There are three turned posts sitting on each riser, and each of the three posts has a different style of spool turning.

The elaborate newel post at the bottom of the staircase features carved details. The newel cap is curved and completely carved with classical foliage. Under the newel cap are both egg-and-dart and dentil moldings. Below the moldings are four panels filled with large carved ellipses. The post is decorated with narrow carved Ionic column moldings. The balustrade along the second run of the staircase has a curved banister and the posts at both ends have flat newel caps decorated with Ionic volutes and egg and dart moldings. Under the newel cap are large up-raised carved acanthus leaves.

The landing between the two runs of the staircase has several decorative features. A small, curved balustrade creates a balcony that projects over the foyer. Along the east wall of the landing is a large tripartite opening, consisting of a door and two flanking windows. The opening is decorated with paneled stiles and an entablature molding with a beaded cornice.

Interior, Second Floor

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At the top of the main staircase is a central hallway that runs east and west, with access to five bedrooms, a bathroom, and a rear staircase behind identical oak paneled doors. The doors are decorated with paneled jambs, entablature cornice moldings, and, in the case of four of the bedrooms, transoms. All of the moldings facing the hallway are oak, as is the floor of the hallway. But, like the first floor, the bedrooms have different types of wood and are decorated with an abundance of antiques and period décor. Even the modern bathroom uses period and antique pieces. There are fireplaces in the master bedroom and the two bedrooms in the towers, and all of the rooms and the hallway have original cast iron radiators.

The master bedroom features tiger eye maple, which is used for the doors and moldings. These moldings consist of paneled jambs and entablature cornice moldings and there is a picture rail running around the room near the ceiling. The walls are covered with wallpaper, as are the ceilings. The floors are covered with maple board flooring. The master bedroom fireplace has a facing of green ceramic tile, a material also used for the hearth. The fireplace mantel features narrow pilasters with small Ionic capitals. The mantel shelf is accented with both dentil and bead and reel moldings. The overmantel has a swan's neck pediment ending with large rosettes. Raised carved cornucopia and floral decoration flanks a long oval mirror.

The bedroom in the east tower has a curved south wall and features cherry, which is used for the doors and moldings. The cherry wood is plain in most cases, but some of the trim features a burl effect. The doors and moldings have similar features as the master bedroom, including paneled jambs, entablature cornice moldings, a picture rail with dentils, and paneled doors. These details are accented with dentil and bead moldings. This room also has walls and ceilings covered with wallpaper, and maple flooring. The fireplace has a facing of black and white ceramic tile and a simple wood-paneled mantel. The mantel shelf is supported by a heavy bracket decorated with an acanthus leaf. The overmantel has a wide, rectangular mirror, paneled pilasters, and a cornice with a dentil molding.

The bedroom in the other tower is the same size and also has the curved south wall. This bedroom uses ash in its wood trim and doors, which have the same details as the other tower bedroom, including paneled jambs, entablature cornice moldings, a picture rail with dentils, and paneled doors. These features are accented with dentil and bead moldings. Like the other bedrooms, there is a maple floor. The fireplace has a facing of tan ceramic tiles, which are also used for the hearth. The mantel has wood paneled sides, plain pilasters, and a shelf supported by two brackets. The overmantel features a central rectangular mirror flanked by panels and a prominent cornice with a dentil molding.

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Between the two tower bedrooms is a smaller, butler's bedroom. It has a ceiling that slants toward the south wall and features that are similar to the other bedrooms. The wood used in this room is maple, and maple is also used for the floor. The walls and ceiling are covered with wallpaper. The bathroom sits along the west wall and is renovated with antique and period details. The maple floor was salvaged from an old church and new cherry wainscoting was custom made for the walls. The original woodwork in the bathroom is cherry and is similar in detail to the bedrooms. The fixtures are modern "Victorian" reproductions.

The maid's bedroom sits at the northwest corner of the house, near the back staircase. It is a small room with details that are less elaborate than those of the rest of the second floor. The trim around the door and window of the room is the same type as the trim in the kitchen, using the same curly maple wood. The floor is covered with plain maple flooring and the unusually textured plaster walls are painted. The dumbwaiter goes through this room and is covered with a three-panel wood door.

The back staircase is enclosed and the walls have wainscoting made up of the curly maple found in the kitchen area and the maid's bedroom. This wainscoting also makes up the balustrade of this staircase. The upper part of the walls is plastered. The back staircase leads into the service area of the house, near the back entrances and the kitchen.

Interior, Third Floor and Basement

The third floor of the house is a large finished room known as the "exercise room." It was reportedly used for dances and games and was remodeled to its current appearance during the 1920s. The room has stucco-covered walls and mahogany wood trim, which is repeated on the ceiling, giving the room a Tudor or Craftsman effect. The room has a wood floor and there are built-in seats along the walls.

The basement of this house is also finished. The staircase down to this level ends in a central hallway. To the left of the hallway there is a large storage room, a small bathroom, and a laundry. Near the staircase is a small oil room and ahead is the furnace room. In the laundry room, the dumb waiter ends, and the small bathroom has period fixtures and is finished with the curly maple wood trim and wainscoting found in the kitchen of the house.

The main hallway of the basement and the large family room were remodeled during the 1920s, using a "Rathskeller" motif. The hallway features a wide pine board floor and oak doors and moldings. A large, elliptically-arched double-door entrance leads into the family room. In this room, the pine flooring has been given a finish that resembles tile. The walls of the family room

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and the hallway have an almost Cubist appearance. At one end of the family room, there is a rustic brick fireplace that features a simple wooden shelf and a brick overmantel. Built-in bookcases flank the fireplace and above them are two small rectangular windows. The current owners have furnished the room in the same "Rathskeller" motif, using modern and antique furniture and decorative items.

Carriage House

To the northwest of the house is the two-story matching carriage house. This building has a steeply-pitched intersecting gable roof with returned eaves on the north, south, and east elevations. A gable-roofed dormer projects from the west elevation. The roof is covered with the cement tile that was used on the main house, and the walls of the carriage house are covered with similar clapboards as seen on the main house.

Punctuating the second story walls of the carriage house are three Palladian windows (north, south, and east elevations). The north and south window groups consist of three sashes with vertically-divided upper lights. The central sash is topped with a fanlight. The east elevation Palladian motif window consists of two larger sashes that have vertically-divided upper lights. Both openings are topped with a large fanlight. On the rear elevation, a tall opening runs from the ceiling to the lower level of the dormer.

The first story openings consist of three sashes with vertically-divided upper lights on the north and south elevations, an entrance and smaller window opening on the west elevation, and a set of "period" paneled garage doors that have wood panels in the lower half and glazed panels in the upper half. The north garage door is large enough to cover two automobile bays, while the south garage door covers a single bay. The carriage house is in excellent condition and is a contributing resource to property.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1892

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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SIGNIFICANCE²

The Rudolph and Louise Ebert House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C, architecture, because it is locally significant as a fine and unusual example of the transitional Queen Anne style. The house features the major elements of the style, but with a progressive interpretation that makes it distinctive. The house was also built using very high quality materials and workmanship and its museum-quality restoration over the past 25 years has given it an outstanding level of historic integrity. The owners have restored all of the historic fabric of the house using the highest level preservation methods on both the building's interior and exterior, even down to the carriage house. There are several good examples of the Queen Anne style in Fond du Lac, but they are all very typical of the style as it is usually interpreted in Wisconsin. This house is among the best examples of the style in the city, and its unusual interpretation makes it significant. Also, there is probably no other house in Fond du Lac that matches the integrity of this building, except, perhaps, for the Galloway House, the Fond du Lac Historical Society museum house.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Between 1672 and 1829, the area at the southern end of Lake Winnebago was visited by French explorers, missionaries, and fur trappers; and trading posts were built in what is now the city of Fond du Lac. In 1829, James Duane Doty, along with several companions, traveled from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien looking for sites to develop. Among the sites they viewed was an area where the Fond du Lac River flows into Lake Winnebago. In 1835, after the federal government overcame Native American claims to the area, Doty and George McWilliams purchased 3,705 acres of this land under the name of the Fond du Lac Company. Within these acres, Doty also drew the city's original plat of 33 city blocks with 1800 lots.³

In 1836, the historic Military Road came through Fond du Lac on its way between Green Bay and Prairie du Chien, an event that helped early settlement in the state. Looking to capitalize on the new road, the Fond du Lac Company established a tavern, inn, and land office at the site of the new community. Brothers Colwert and Edward Pier, with Colwert's wife, Fanny, agreed to run this business in a log cabin, becoming the first permanent white settlers in Fond du Lac.⁴

²This footnote pertains to the period of significance on page one of Section 8. The period of significance for this house is the probable date of construction. The date for this house was selected based on an evaluation of the owner's abstract and historic tax rolls, which were strongly indicated the 1892 construction date.

³ Carol Lohry Cartwright, *City of Fond du Lac Intensive Survey Report*, Fond du Lac: City of Fond du Lac, 1992, pp. 9-10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

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In 1838, physician Mason C. Darling, who was recruited to the new settlement by James Doty, arrived in Fond du Lac. As a fee for locating there, the Fond du Lac Company gave Darling 80 acres of prime land in the new plat, along with some nearby farmland. In a shrewd, but underhanded, economic move, Darling legally blocked the Fond du Lac Company from selling their lots for a time, while selling the lots from his own 80-acre parcel and some additional land he had obtained. Much of Darling's land was in what would develop as downtown Fond du Lac, and Darling quickly became wealthy. Additionally, Darling promoted the settlement by giving away some lots, donating land for the county courthouse, acquiring the postmaster appointment, and opening a hotel. But, despite Darling's efforts, Fond du Lac grew slowly during the 1840s, and only 400 people lived there in 1847.⁵

During the 1850s and 1860s, the population of Fond du Lac grew rapidly, the result of two important developments. The first was the development of an important rail link. In 1851, ground was broken for the Rock River Valley Railroad, a line out of Janesville, Wisconsin. This line was reorganized in 1855 and absorbed by the large Chicago NorthWestern Railroad Company (CNW) in 1859. The Fond du Lac stop was part of the CNW's rail line that they developed through eastern Wisconsin during the 1860s, a line that became one of the most important transportation lines in the state.⁶

The second development that changed Fond du Lac was the lumber industry. Fond du Lac was an early "sawmill town," processing the timber that came down the Fox River system from areas north of the city. The first sawmill built in Fond du Lac operated in 1846-1847, then reopened in 1849, and operated until 1855. During the 1850s and 1860s, more sawmills were established in Fond du Lac. In 1873, at the peak of the lumber industry in the community, the city had 18 lumber and wood products mills that employed over 1,400 workers, who processed 67,000,000 feet of lumber and 2.3 million dollars worth of wood products.⁷

Largely due to these developments, the population of Fond du Lac rose to almost 5,000 in the early 1850s, then doubled to 10,000 during the 1860s. At the peak of the lumber boom, Fond du Lac had just over 15,000 residents, 18 churches, six banks, and a dozen hotels. In order to house all of these new residents, a building boom began in the city. This boom included the development of downtown Fond du Lac, as well as three residential neighborhoods that grew up to the east, west, and south of the downtown. Much of the new housing was built for workers

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 11, 108.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

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and was simple, vernacular housing, but a number of wealthier families built larger, more stylish, houses in these neighborhoods.⁸

In the residential area east of Fond du Lac's downtown, the larger, more stylish houses were concentrated primarily along two streets, East Division and Sheboygan, and during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this area developed into the city's most prominent residential neighborhood. South and east of the city's downtown, the larger, more stylish houses were less concentrated. Only two small concentrated areas of stylish houses were built in these neighborhoods. One is a small area along West Division Street close to downtown, and the other is a small area along Linden Street, just south of the city's downtown and courthouse complex.

After the lumber industry died out in the 1880s, Fond du Lac's economy slowed for a while. Although the city had other industries, none could rival the size of the lumber mills and factories. But, after the turn of the twentieth century, new or expanded industries brought a revival of the city's industrial economy. Large repair shops and division headquarters for both the Soo Line and Chicago NorthWestern railroads in North Fond du Lac employed almost 2,000 men by 1912. Several industries, including the Fred Rueping Leather Company, the Moore and Galloway Lumber Company, and the Giddings and Lewis Company, employed another 1,500 workers at that time. Several smaller industries, such as the Gurney Refrigerator Company, the Fond du Lac Table Manufacturing Company, the Northern Casket Company, the Vulcan Manufacturing Company, and the Galloway-West Dairy Products Company employed almost 1,000 workers in 1912. These companies continued to grow during the twentieth century; in particular, the Giddings and Lewis Company, the Vulcan Manufacturing Company, and the Galloway-West Company. They were the core of Fond du Lac's industrial economy in the twentieth century that helped the city become one of the largest industrial centers in east-central Wisconsin.⁹

During the economic boom of the early twentieth century, Fond du Lac's already-established residential neighborhoods grew significantly. But, most of this new housing was in the form of small to medium-sized residences built for the skilled industrial workers of the city. In fact, Fond du Lac's historic housing stock contains large concentrations of American Foursquare and simple Bungalow style houses, both built among the older streetscapes of the city and in new streetscapes further east, west, and south of the older neighborhoods. In the East Division and Sheboygan streets neighborhood of large, stylish houses, the new construction of the early twentieth century consisted primarily of large Craftsman and Period Revival style homes. But, in the older neighborhoods to the south and west of downtown Fond du Lac, including the West Division and Linden Street neighborhoods, this new construction was primarily smaller "infill"

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

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type housing for middle-class and working-class families that was typical of the American Foursquare and Bungalow homes rising in other areas of the city.

During the late twentieth century, the residential neighborhoods of Fond du Lac continued to expand, primarily with tracts of suburban-style ranch houses. The prominent neighborhood along East Division and Sheboygan streets has been largely retained, and some houses that had been deteriorating during the 1970s and 1980s, are now being restored. The other older neighborhoods in Fond du Lac have seen more intrusive elements introduced and more remodeling. But, overall, these neighborhoods are relatively stable, and the larger, historic period homes along West Division and Linden Streets are still extant. Other older houses scattered throughout the city have also been largely preserved and are recognized as local landmarks in the community.

Local banker and businessman Rudolph Ebert, and his wife, Louise, were one of the prominent late nineteenth century families in Fond du Lac when they had this house built in 1892. According to the building abstract, the Eberts purchased the lot this house stands on in February of 1891 and probably began the building process that spring. According to the tax assessment rolls, the lot had no value in 1890, then a slightly larger value in 1891, and finally, the largest value in 1892. These documents strongly suggest that this house was completed in 1892. Although a newspaper search was conducted, no mention of the completion of this house was located. Over the last couple of decades, the owners have made attempts to find the name of the architect and/or builder of this house, but to no avail. For the purposes of this nomination, another attempt was made to find this information, but, again, the names remain elusive.¹⁰

Rudolph Ebert was born in Germany in 1829. He was one of the "forty-eighters" who came to Wisconsin in 1848, mostly for political reasons. They were largely well-educated professionals or skilled artisans in their homeland. Although Ebert was young when he left Germany, he was probably well-educated and ambitious. He began farming upon arrival in Fond du Lac County, but in 1850, he was hired as a clerk in the Register of Deeds Office. He was elected Registrar in 1852 and served until 1854. He left public service to open his own abstracting and real estate office. He maintained this office until 1866, when he and J. C. Perry started a private bank.¹¹

The bank of Ebert and Perry operated privately until 1873, when it was reorganized as a State Savings Bank under the name, German American Savings Bank. Ebert was the president of this

¹⁰ Building abstract, in possession of the owner; Tax Rolls for the City of Fond du Lac, on file in the Area Research Center of the Library of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

¹¹ Butterfield, C. W., *History of Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin*, Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880, p. 800.

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bank and Perry held the position of Cashier. The German American Bank operated independently until 1887, when it was consolidated with the new Fond du Lac National Bank. In 1918, the Fond du Lac National Bank merged with the First National Bank to become the First Fond du Lac National Bank. This bank eventually became a branch of the First Wisconsin Bank, now Firststar Bank, still operating in downtown Fond du Lac.¹²

Ebert served six terms as city treasurer and also served on the board of education. In 1856, he had married Louise Encking. Although the couple had six children, only one survived to adulthood. The couple built this showplace home as the culmination of Rudolph's achievements in the business world. Rudolph Ebert died in 1902, only ten years after the house was completed, and just after selling it to a new owner. In 1912, the Eberts' only surviving child died, leaving Louise Ebert only her two grandchildren and daughter-in-law as close family members, although they lived in Germany. In 1914, Louise Ebert died in Germany, where she had gone to her grandson's wedding.¹³

In 1901, the Eberts sold this house to Charles L. and Grace Hastings, who owned it until 1926. Charles Hastings was another prominent businessman in Fond du Lac during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hastings was born in Oshkosh in 1858, the son of early Fond du Lac pioneers who returned to the city when Charles was a young boy. Charles Hastings attended Fond du Lac's public schools and a local business college. He entered his father's stock buying and meat packing business, then later worked for Armour Meat Packing in Chicago. He also worked with his father in a yeast manufacturing business, then bought an interest in the Fond du Lac Tent & Awning Company. He later helped organize the De Luxe Rug Company and served as its president.¹⁴

In 1884, Hastings married Grace Chesebro of Waupun and the family had four children. Hastings was active in civic organizations that promoted commerce in Fond du Lac, and his death in 1924 made major local news. Grace Hastings continued to live in the home until September of 1926, when she sold it to William J. and Frances Nuss, who lived there until around 1957. The Nusses converted the basement to living space. During the 1960s and much of the 1970s, the house had eight owners and was remodeled, including the application of aluminum siding and the enclosure of the front porch. In 1977, Frank and Debra Dorn acquired the house and the next year began their restoration efforts.¹⁵

¹² Butterfield, p. 639; Cartwright, p. 65.

¹³ "Mrs. Ebert Dies On Visit Abroad," *Fond du Lac Daily Commonwealth*, 13 May 1914, p. 5.

¹⁴ "C. L. Hastings, De Luxe Co. President, Dead," *Fond du Lac Daily Commonwealth*, 30 June 1924, p. 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Building Abstract; Information from current owners.

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The Dorns removed all of the carpeting in the house and restored the wood floors and woodwork. Debra Dorn spent several months restoring the Lincrusta borders and raised plaster ceiling decoration, using old photographs as a guide. After about four years, the Dorns removed the aluminum siding and restored the clapboard exterior, replacing some damaged wood trim. They spent many years working on the elaborate formal landscaping of the property and adding a brick walk and driveway that came from the paving around the old railroad depot in Ripon, Wisconsin. The carriage house was also renovated, and in 1988 and 1989, the cement tiles were applied to the roof. They have also worked on restoring the basement area and third floor area to its 1920s appearance.

The Dorns have expended a considerable amount of their personal funds to restore this house and have made restoration decisions that give this house its museum-quality appearance. Although the physical plant of the house is modern, the Dorns have chosen to avoid alterations that others might feel are essential conveniences, such as more, larger, or attached bathrooms, bigger bedrooms and closets, and modern built-in kitchen features. Instead, they have maintained the historic floor plan of the house and removed modern built-in cabinets and appliances from the kitchen. They keep the kitchen's historic appearance by using the butler's and maid's pantries to house kitchen equipment and supplies and they have period and antique equipment in place of modern built-ins.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE

The Rudolph and Louise Ebert House is significant for architecture at the local level because it is one of the best and most unusual examples of the late Queen Anne style in Fond du Lac. The house was built using very high quality materials, particularly on the interior, and shows a high level of craftsmanship. It is neither as picturesque in the use of elaborate wood trim nor as irregular and rambling as some of the other Queen Anne houses in Fond du Lac. Its use of massive forms and classical details reflects some of the Queen Anne interpretations designed by prominent architects in the eastern United States rather than what is typically seen in Wisconsin. This different form and massing makes it stand out as an unusual interpretation of the style. Its high, museum-quality level of preservation also makes it stand out as one of the city's finest historic houses.

In its massing, the Ebert House recalls the 1880s Shingle Style designs of McKim, Mead and White and of Henry Hobson Richardson found in New England. While these examples have a continuous covering of shingles, the Ebert House is sheathed in a uniform covering of clapboards. The Ebert House and the New England houses lack any of the decorative scalloping and decorative shingle work found in more typical Queen Anne examples of the period. The

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Ebert House also picks up the emerging horizontality, the use of Colonial Revival elements and the symmetry found in the mature Shingle Style works of McKim, Mead and White.

The broadly defined Queen Anne style of architecture was popular in Wisconsin between 1880 and 1910, and it is seen in the state in large numbers. Often called "Victorian," the Queen Anne style is characterized by asymmetry and irregularity of plan and massing. Queen Anne houses often have a variety of surface materials, such as wood shingles, stone veneer, or stucco. Common details of the style include steeply pitched multiple gable or combination hip and gable roofs, gable projections, bays with elaborate hoodmoldings or cornices, round or polygonal turrets or oriels, classical details, and large, wrap-around verandas. Fenestration is irregular both in size and in placement of openings. Many Queen Anne houses built after 1900 are less picturesque and more symmetrical than their earlier counterparts, but the style had so many variations that both picturesque and classical versions were built throughout the period of its popularity.¹⁶

According to the 1992-completed survey of historic resources in Fond du Lac, there are many good examples of the Queen Anne style in Fond du Lac and they can generally be divided into three groups; the group that shows its style primarily in its exuberant use of picturesque details and stickwork; the group that shows its style primarily in its irregular form and massing; and the group that has unusual style elements that make them stand out as distinctive, in and of themselves, or as transitional to a more modern style. There are several good examples of each of these groups cited in the survey report, all potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. But, in the third group, the Ebert House is the best example, and different from the others in the group which have unusual style elements primarily because they are transitional to a more modern style, such as the Tudor Revival or Colonial Revival styles.

The Ebert House is unusual primarily because of its form and massing. The house is large, but instead of an irregular and rambling plan, it is generally rectangular with a symmetrical facade. The massive towers on the main elevation are not typical of Queen Anne towers seen elsewhere in the city. The two-story bay on the east elevation also has an unusual shape and crenellated roofline. The fenestration is both regular and irregular. On the main elevation, it is regular and classical. The overall architectural impression of the house is Queen Anne, yet there is a strong Shingle Style impression, as well. The result is a house unlike anything else in Fond du Lac.

The Ebert House probably received its unusual appearance from an architect, who may have been experimenting with the style or been influenced by what other architects were doing

¹⁶ Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. II*, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, p. 2-15.

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elsewhere in the country. It is unfortunate that an architect or even a builder has not been identified, because this information might shed significant light on the unusual nature of this house. In any event, the Ebert House's architectural significance as an example of the transitional Queen Anne style is not so much that it is a typical example that uses common style elements in an elaborate manner, but because it is an unusual example of the style in Fond du Lac.

Aside from its unusual style elements, this house is architecturally significant because of its use of high quality materials and construction techniques. The use of clapboards with a beveled edge, for example, gives the exterior a distinctive appearance. The size of the Palladian and oval windows fit in well with the large scale details of the house and illustrate the custom work that was used throughout to complete this house.

The high quality of materials and construction techniques extends to the interior. The use of different types of wood in the formal rooms of Queen Anne houses was popular for those who could afford it, but the Ebert House takes this use almost to the extreme, with the use of unusual and decorative woods extended even to areas of the house not open to the public. And, ironically, the decorative curly maple, used in the service areas of the house, has a beautiful and unusual appearance that most people would showcase today, not hide in the kitchen wing. So even in the least public areas of the house, the use of interesting and high quality wood, makes this house distinctive.

It is not just the number of different wood types used in this house that makes it impressive, but it is the elaborate and "spare no expense" way in which the wood was used. The only plain moldings seen in the entire house are in the kitchen area and the upstairs maid's room. The other parts of the house have an abundance of wood trim with classical details. Few areas of trim are left without the addition of dentil, bead, or bead and reel moldings. This is also true of the fireplaces, as well, which have wooden enclosures and/or mantels. And, instead of using the same mantel type in some of the rooms, all of the mantels have individual details that range from added moldings to elaborate raised carvings. And the facing materials also span a wide variety of high quality materials, from ceramic tiles to slate tiles to marble.

Another detail that stands out in this fine interior is the use of the delicate raised plaster decoration on the ceilings of the parlor, living room, and dining room. Plaster medallions and moldings are often seen in nineteenth century houses, but the delicate floral plasterwork on these ceilings is exquisitely made and expertly restored. Adding to the elegant look of the first floor are the lincrusta borders, which are also delicate and of a high quality. The classical motifs of these borders add to the overall classicism of the house's interior.

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The "spare no expense" theme of this house is also well illustrated by the main staircase. The massive oak runs with the wide risers give a grand quality to the foyer. The small balcony overlooking the foyer is a distinctive and, even, theatrical touch. And, the use of three different types of turned spool balusters in the balustrade adds to the elaborate and well-crafted appearance of this important interior detail.

The high quality of preservation and restoration of this house is impressive. A photograph taken in 1974, several years before the current owners began their restoration efforts, provides a surprising look at how far this house has come back from inappropriate alterations. The current owners have restored this house using the best techniques and the best quality materials. Both the exterior and interior of this house has a museum-quality level of integrity, and the fact that the owners have used an abundance of antiques to fill the interior makes it even more impressive.

The high quality of preservation extends to the large carriage house. Many carriage houses from this era are lost due to neglect, demolition, and the desire to upgrade to modern facilities. There are few carriage houses in Fond du Lac that have the high level of preservation of this carriage house. In its own right, it is a fine example of a matching outbuilding, particularly in the use of the same type of siding as the main house and the use of the Palladian windows. It is an important and contributing element of the property. The beautifully landscaped site also adds to the high quality of the property, showcasing the house and its matching carriage house.

The Rudolph and Louise Ebert House is architecturally significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because it is a fine and unusual example of the transitional Queen Anne style, one of the best examples of the style in Fond du Lac. Its high level of integrity is only matched by a real museum house operated by a historical society. One of the statements often made in discussing the integrity of a house is whether original owners would recognize the building if they returned to view it today. In this case, not only would the Eberts recognize their house, they would feel very comfortable taking up residence again.

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Rudolph and Louise Ebert House has a boundary that is described as follows: R. A. and H. O. Baker's Addition, Lots 19-20.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of this property has been its historic site since the house was built in 1892.

Ebert, Rudolph and Louise, House
Name of Property

Fond du Lac
County and State

WI

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	Frank and Debra Dorn	date	8/10/01
organization		telephone	920-921-2257
street&number	199 E. Division St.	zip code	54935
city or town	Fond du Lac	state	WI

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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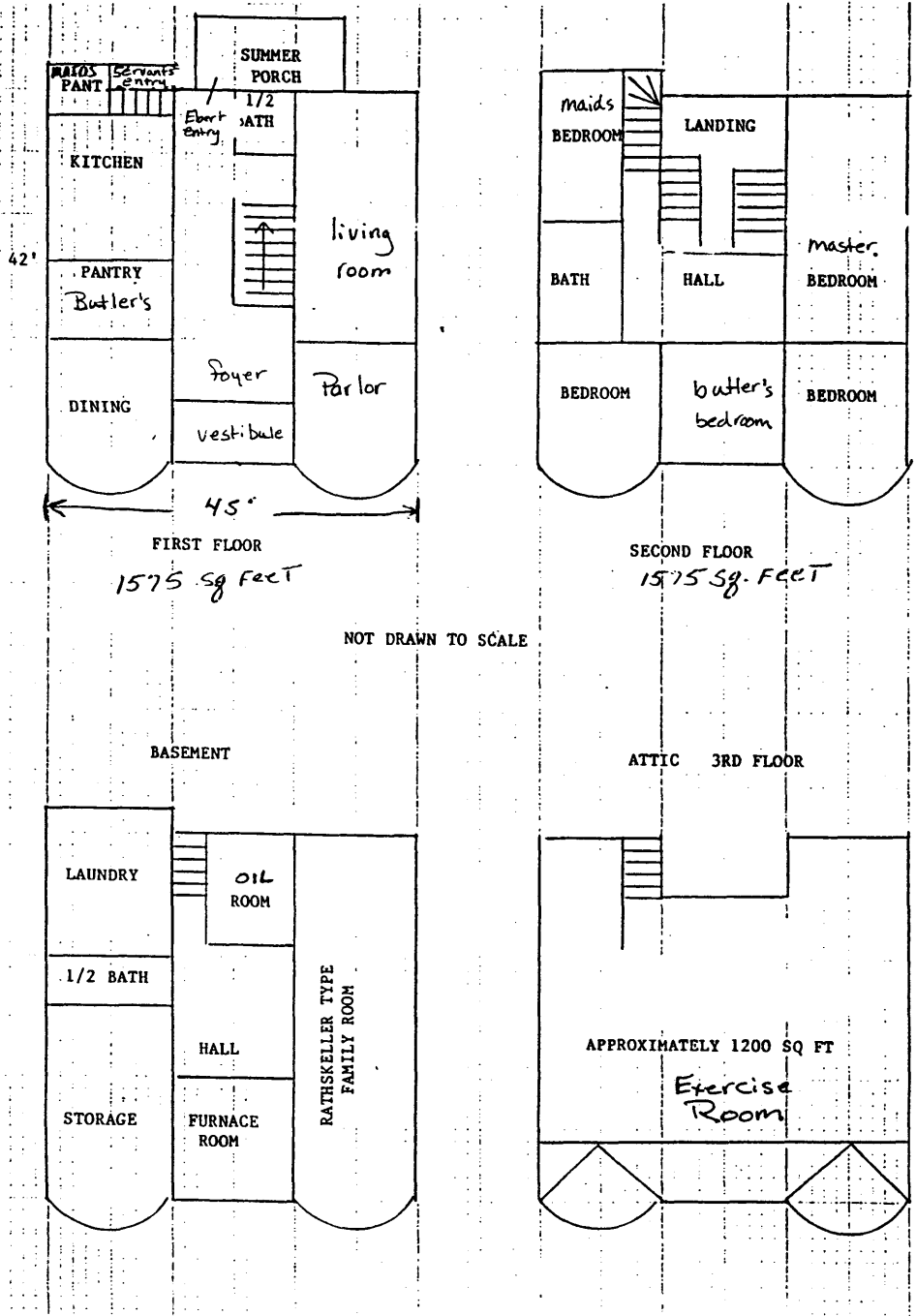
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RUDOLPH AND LOUISE EBERT HOUSE, 199 E. Division Street, Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin. Photos by Carol Cartwright, February 2001. Negatives on file in the Historic Preservation Division of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Views:

- 1 of 16: Site view from the southwest.
- 2 of 16: Main elevation, from the south.
- 3 of 16: North elevation, from the northwest.
- 4 of 16: Interior, first floor, foyer sitting area with fireplace.
- 5 of 16: Interior, first floor, parlor fireplace and lincrusta and ceiling detail.
- 6 of 16: Interior, first floor, living room fireplace and sitting area.
- 7 of 16: Interior, first floor, living room showing lincrusta and ceiling detail.
- 8 of 16: Interior, first floor, from dining room looking across foyer into parlor.
- 9 of 16: Interior, first floor, dining room detail.
- 10 of 16: Interior, first floor, looking from kitchen into butler's pantry.
- 11 of 16: Interior, first floor, main staircase.
- 12 of 16: Interior, second floor, hallway looking at master bedroom and southeast bedroom.
- 13 of 16: Interior, second floor, master bedroom fireplace.
- 14 of 16: Interior, second floor, southwest bedroom fireplace.
- 15 of 16: Interior, basement, looking into family room from hallway.
- 16 of 17: Carriage house, view from the southwest.

EBERT, RUDOLPH AND LOUISE, HOUSE
FLOOR PLANS
 FOND DU LAC, FOND DU LAC COUNTY, WISCONSIN



Plans Courtesy of Frank and Debra Dorn, Building Owners