

Iowa Site Inventory

Office of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department
East 12th & Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Site Number W - S0 -E1
District Name Legacy In Stone TR
Map Reference # 84

Identification

1. Site Name J.G. and Elizabeth S. Vawter House
2. Village/Town/City Winterset Township _____ County Madison
3. Street Address 223 S. First St.
4. Legal Location Winterset 30 Lot 5,6
Urban: subdivision block parcel subparcel
Rural: township range section % section of 1/4 section
- (Map 3A)
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 415,250 northing 4,575,980 Acreage less than one acre
6. Owner(s) Name Patricia W. Barry
7. Owner(s) Address Box 49895 144 N. Bristol Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90049
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
8. Use: Present 2 Apartments Original Residence

Description

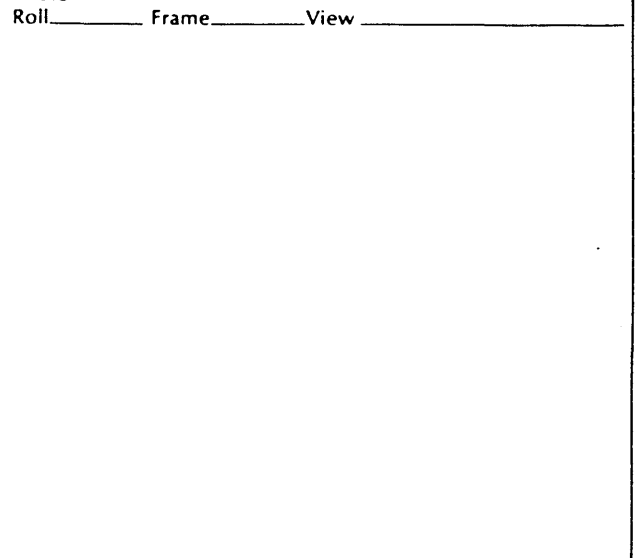
9. Date of Construction c. 1856 Architect/Builder Caleb Clark
10. Building Type:
 single-family dwelling industrial other institutional religious
 multiple-family dwelling educational public agricultural
 commercial
11. Exterior Walls: clapboard stone brick board and batten shingles stucco
 other Native limestone
12. Structural System: wood frame with interlocking joints wood frame with light members (balloon frame)
 masonry load-bearing walls iron frame steel frame with curtain walls reinforced concrete
 other _____
13. Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated
14. Integrity: original site moved—if so, when? _____
Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site:

Several changes to porch. Frame addition on east
15. Related Outbuildings and Property: barn other farm structures carriage house garage privy
 other _____
16. Is the building endangered? no yes—if so, why? _____
17. Surroundings of the building: open land woodland scattered outbuildings densely built-up commercial
 industrial residential other _____

18. Map



19. Photo



SIGNIFICANCE

20. Architectural Significance

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
 - b. Contributing structure
- Subtheme(s): Identified Master Designer/Builder: Clark
Function: Residential

The Elizabeth S. and J. G. Vawter House is an early example of a vernacular limestone mansion built in town. It is the only extant compound type house in the county. Notable features include a door with arched, protruding hood mould and fan shaped transom; very large windows on the south; lintels with cornices; an octagonal and a square chimney both made of stone; louvred third floor window and icicle shaped barge boards.

The two story main gable of the house is 26' x 37' and there is an 8' x 15' gable extension to the south. There is a 17' x 30' one and one-half story gabled stone kitchen addition to the east and a series of small frame additions extending east of the kitchen. The west gabled main entrance facade has a door on the right and two windows on the left with three second story windows above them. There is a centered arched and louvred window in the gable. The south facade has a large window in the stairwell under the eaves. The south gable is a secondary street facade. Each of the west, south, and east parts of it has large windows. The earlier windows have been replaced with casement windows with fixed panes above them. In the second story there is a window with six over six sashes above each casement window. The south main entrance facade of the kitchen addition has a window on the left and a door on the right. Above and slightly to the right of the door is dormer with a window that bisects the roof line at the eaves. The east gable facade of the kitchen addition has a second story window toward the street. The first story is obscured by an addition. The east gable facade of the two story part of the main house has a small window just above the roof line of the kitchen addition. The north facade has two main floor windows with two second floor windows above and two small basement windows below.

The public facades on the west, the south and the entire south facing gable were made of squared, almost ashlar limestone with draft lines with carefully exaggerated quarry face. Stone was laid in courses with ribbon joints. However, the ribbon joints were more crudely done than in the Ford (77N29W-24.1) or (name withheld) houses.

There is a protruding water table on the west, south, and all sides of the south facing gable. The north facade is constructed of quarry faced rubble laid in courses with grapevine joints. The east one and one half story addition is built of finished cut quarry/faced stone laid in courses and with grapevine joints. The quoins and jambs of the main west and south facades are of stone textured like the stone of the facade. The east gable addition, the east and north facades have quoins and jambs of finished cut quarry faced stone. On the main facades lintels are dimension sandstone with axed texturing and protruding cornices. Other lintels are dimension sandstone textured with a tool with a small round point. Sills are protruding dimension sandstone with axed surface texturing. Windows are splayed and the reveals are paneled with cabinet paneling. The first floor windows on the south have pairs of long narrow casement windows.

The main entrance has an arched hood mould with a protruding cornice that follows the lines of the arch. (There is a similar member above the third floor louvred window.) There is a fan shaped transom above the door that has five panes forming a semi-circle. The door is recessed half the width of the stone wall and the reveal is not paneled. The stone in the reveal is drafted. The portico at the main entrance is a later addition. The secondary entrance to the kitchen addition is recessed and not paneled in the reveal.

There is a dimension sandstone lintel. Jambs are made with very large stones at top and bottom which give a shoulder and plinth like effect similar to that of the Schoenenberger House (74N27W-7) and the Schnellbacher House (75N29W-13).

The overhanging eaves and verges are closed with mitred soffits. There are no boards against the stone, but there are icicle shaped barge boards. There is a square stone chimney at the end of the east gable ridge and an octagonal at the end of the south gable ridge.

The house is earliest mansion built in the county. It is larger and has more expensive details than other houses in the county. The house is one of those attributed to Caleb Clark

21. Historical Significance

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
 - b. Contributing Structure
- Theme(s) Early Settlement

The house was owned by Elizabeth S. Vawter, wife of J. G. Vawter, who was one of the earliest merchants in Winterset. Soon after he arrived in 1854 he built a large two story stone store building. The house was probably built before 1857. During the Panic of 1857 Vawter experienced financial difficulties. In 1858 the Vawter's daughter died and was buried in the Winterset cemetery. Sometime between then and 1865 the Vawters left the community. In 1865, W. W. McKnight obtained title to the house and store through a sheriff's sale.

22. Sources

Courthouse Records. Winterset, Iowa: Madison County Recorders' Office.

Davies, J. J. History and Business Directory of Madison Co., Ia. Des Moines; Mills and Co. Printers and Publishers, 1869.

Harvey, Robert. Historical Stone Houses of Winterset, Iowa, Prior to and During the Civil War Period. Term Paper, Iowa State University, 1960.

Houlette, William Dk. "Madison County's Wonderful Stone Houses," The Iowan.

Koch, Augustus, artist. Bird's Eye View of the City of Winterset, Madison County, Iowa, 1869. Chicago: Chicago Lithographing & Co., n.d.

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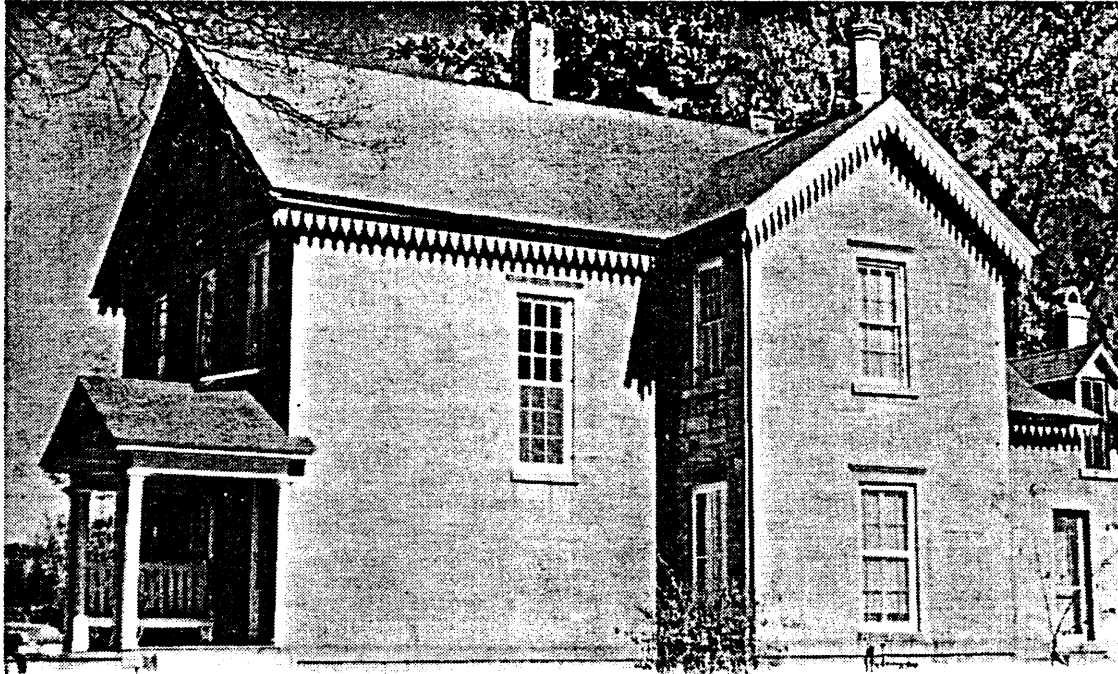
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Site Number W-SO-El/Vawter House

Continuation Sheet

Item Number(s) _____

The Robbins' house in Winterset was probably built in 1856. It is well preserved.



W. D. Houlette, "Madison County's Wonderful Stone Houses."
The Iowan, Volume 2, No. 6, August-September 1954, pp. 30-35.