



326

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Prospect House

other names/site number Ernest C. and Kathrina Colehour Wilkins House

2. Location

street & number 403 Lake Ave. N.

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

city or town Battle Lake

state Minnesota code MN county Otter Tail code 111 zip code 56515

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Barbara Mitchell Howard April 5, 2013
Signature of certifying official/Title Barbara Mitchell Howard, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Minnesota Historical Society Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Jon Edson H. Beall 5-28-13
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Prospect House
Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

REVIVALS/Colonial Revival/Georgian Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD/Weatherboard

roof: WOOD/Shingle

other:

Prospect House
Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota
County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Prospect House is located in Battle Lake on a 0.6-acre parcel atop a ridge on the west side of Lake Avenue North (Minnesota Highway 78). Originally constructed in 1887 as a large wing for a hotel, it was renovated as a Georgian Revival style single-family home in 1929. The two-story, side-gabled dwelling has a symmetrical east façade composed of a central entryway and flanking windows. The one-story porte-cochere on the north and sun parlor on the south contribute to the balanced elevation. Distinctive features of the Georgian Revival style include an elaborate door surround, corner fluted pilasters, Classical cornice and symmetrical chimney placement. A garage and child's play house on the parcel are contemporaneous to the house's 1929 renovation.

Narrative Description

The Prospect House property is located on a high knoll near the north end of the city of Battle Lake at 403 Lake Avenue North, near the intersection of Dunton Street East. West Battle Lake itself lies to the east. The 0.6-acre parcel on the west side of Lake Avenue North (Minnesota Highway 78) is separated from the street by deciduous trees and other vegetation. An asphalt driveway on the north side of the parcel leads to the house, through the porte-cochere, and to the garage, which is situated directly west of the house. A small play house is south of the garage.

The house stands two stories on a concrete foundation and is rectangular in plan. It has a side-gabled roof clad with wood shingles, and the siding is of wide, wood clapboard. Exterior brick chimneys with corbelled caps centered on each gable end, the one-story sun parlor on the south, and the one-story porte-cochere on the north emphasize the symmetrical plan. The principal east-facing façade is also symmetrically composed with a central doorway flanked by two windows on the first and second stories. Most windows are wooden double-hung sash units with 12-over-12 or 6-over-6 light configurations. A pair of narrow 4-over-4 windows is placed directly over the doorway (Photo #0001).

The principal area of elaboration and emphasis is the front door entablature, which is inspired by the 1720 Joseph Stebbins house in Deerfield, Massachusetts, an ancestor of Kathrina Wilkins and owner of the house at the time of the remodeling. The single, six-panel door is flanked by fluted pilasters on pedestals with Ionic capital volutes. A cornice with a keystone and Greek key motif surmounts the pilasters, above which is an arched pediment with deep block modillions and moldings. A transom with five arched lights is placed directly above the doorway. Similar Classical detailing can be found elsewhere on the house. The corners are finished with fluted pilasters, and the block modillion and Greek key pattern are repeated on the principal cornice. Fluted pilasters are also found on the sun parlor and porte-cochere wings, and on the two east dormers. The dormer roofs are arched and trimmed in a simplified version of the door surround. Elaborate and decorated rainwater heads on the façade's downspouts suggest the high level of detail and design quality. Most of the larger windows have solid-panel, operating shutters (Photo #0003).

The sun parlor and porte-cochere wings are proportionally balanced, but serve different functions. Each is mounted on a raised brick foundation, and exhibits paired fluted pilasters and square columns. Their flat roofs offer an exterior balcony accessed through French doors from the second story bedrooms. Wooden railings with cross members in open rectangle and circle designs are adorned with wooden ornamental urns at each corner. The porte-cochere is open for the driveway passage. Pedestrian access to the porte-cochere is through a first-story French door from the dining room. On the south side, the sun room is enclosed by 12-over-12 double hung sash window units. The attic story features half-arched windows hugging each side of the central chimney in the north and south gable ends.

The west, rear, elevation has less emphasis on the symmetrical arrangement, suggesting the practical functions within, and perhaps the limitations of the original 1887 building (Photo #0002). This elevation contains a central doorway with

Prospect House

Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota

County and State

simple molding and paired double-hung sash directly above. The south portion contains two windows each on the upper and lower levels in the same pattern as the east elevation. The north portion, however, contains only one set of paired sash kitchen windows on the first story, and a single unit on the second story. The cornice treatment found on the east façade is continued on the west. There are no rear dormers.

Interior

The interior of the house generally follows a traditional central hall plan. The first story features a center hall, vestibule and staircase to the second floor (Photo #0005). The south portion contains a living room that extends the full depth of the house from east to west, and the sun parlor wing. Two fireplaces with a shared chimney are centered on the south wall of the living room and the north wall of the sun parlor. A kitchen and breakfast room occupy the northwest quarter of the first story, and the dining room is in the northeast quarter (Photo #0004). A small half-bath is tucked under the stairway on the west side. The dining room, living room and hall walls have a textured plaster finish covered with multiple layers of paint and a coat of varnish to give it an antique finish. A cove molding finishes the crown of these rooms.

From the hallway, a geometrical staircase with squared balusters and a simple curved newel leads to the second floor. This level contains four bedrooms, one in each corner. A common bathroom is found between the two east bedrooms. The master bedroom, or “owner’s room,” located in the southeast corner is larger, and features an angled corner fireplace, private bathroom, a French door with access to the sun parlor deck, and a direct link to the southwest bedroom, known as the “daughter’s room” on the original plan.

When constructed, the first and second stories were finely finished with painted wood trim, oak flooring, and painted six-panel doors. Two telephones and telephone cabinets were installed, one in the living room and one in the master bedroom. A Trane heating system, originally fed by a wood boiler, provided central heating.

The attic level remained largely untouched during the 1929 remodeling, and retains the configuration and details of the house’s period of use as an inn. The four rooms on this level are linked by a corridor running parallel to the roof ridge. The walls are plastered and the floors are painted boards. Stenciled numbers of the doors are a hold-over from its use as an inn. The highest number – 27 – suggests its one-time capacity.

The basement level was excavated and poured with a concrete floor during the 1929 remodeling. The south end of the basement was designated as a “play room,” possibly intended to house a billiard table, and features a large, stone-faced fireplace. Other rooms in the basement were more functional, and were designated for vegetable storage, wood storage, boiler room and laundry.

Garage

A three-bay garage stands west of the house and is executed in the same style as the house (Photo #0006). Resting on a concrete foundation, the one-story, side-gabled structure is sheathed with wood lap siding, and features details such as a Greek key motif in the cornice, fluted corner pilasters, and cornice returns. Vehicle entry bays are in the north and center bays of the east elevation. They are enclosed by the original vertically folded doors composed of three units, of six-light windows over two panels. The north door has been modified into a fixed overhead unit, and the center door is fixed in place. The third, south, bay contains a pedestrian entry with three upper lights and panel door, and is topped by a transom. The south bay was designated as the “pump and storage room” on the original plans. Nine-over-nine double-hung sash window units are used on the south, west, and north elevations, as well as a fixed sash unit in the gable ends.

Play House

South of the garage is a small play house, reportedly contemporaneous with the house and garage, and used by then seven-year-old Kathryn Wilkins. The simple one-room, side-gabled structure stands at approximately five feet in height on a concrete pad (Photo #0007). The walls are clad with horizontal drop siding and a center entry with a rounded arch. Windows are present on each side, and are composed of vertically placed, three-light, divided light sash. The roof is covered with rolled asphalt.

Prospect House
Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota
County and State

Integrity

Although radically altered from its original 1887 form, the Prospect House retains very strong integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association from the period of its transformation into a Colonial Revival house in 1929. No additions have been made since that time, and nearly all of the original exterior materials and design details that exhibit the style remain intact. Interior details, including most of the furnishings, also remain in place from 1929, and are cared for in a museum setting. On the property, the garage and play house completed at the time of the house's renovation are extant and largely unaltered.

Prospect House
Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1929

Significant Dates

1929

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Broaten, Einar O., architect

Foss, Magnus, architect

John Lauritzen Company, builder

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance is 1929, the year the property was remodeled into a single dwelling in the Colonial Revival style.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Prospect House
Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Prospect House, originally constructed as an inn in 1887 and remodeled as a Georgian Revival styled single-family house in 1929, is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture within the statewide context of Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions (1870-1945). The property has been in the ownership of the same family since its construction, and was owned by Ernest C. and Kathrina Wilkins at the time of its renovation. Foss and Broaten Architects of Fergus Falls, Minnesota completed the design. The house, along with the 1929 garage and circa 1929 child's play house, vividly display the revival of interest in authentically recreating early American architectural styles, in this case the Georgian Revival style, a sub-set of the Colonial Revival. This style was the dominant architectural idiom for residences during the first several decades of the twentieth century. During this time, it was also popular to "modernize" Victorian era houses to appear as traditional Colonial homes, going great lengths to induce authenticity. In the case of Prospect House, the elaborate front entry surround design and much of the façade faithfully replicate Mrs. Wilkins' 1772 ancestral home in Deerfield, Massachusetts. Prospect House remains one of the finest local examples of the style and uniquely illustrates the revival of interest in the authentic expression of early American architectural styles.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The first house built on this site was constructed by James Allison "Cap" Colehour (1842-1938) and his wife Catherine (Kate) Augusta Catlin Colehour (c. 1851-1940) in 1882. Colehour was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania to a family whose Quaker heritage dates to the pre-revolutionary era. Cap Colehour fought in the Civil War with the 92nd Illinois mounted infantry, where he was twice injured, and joined Sherman's march to the sea. His experience in the war, and the many letters, artifacts and mementos of his experience in the conflict helped to define his persona, and also serve as the basis for a museum now located in the house. Kate's family heritage also reached well before the American revolution, and her great, great grandfather, Seth Catlin, was a loyal British major. The couple wed in Chicago in 1872, and lived in that city during the first 10 years of their marriage while Cap worked in the post office. Due to failing health, Cap Colehour was advised by his doctor to move west, which took the family to Minnesota, and Battle Lake.¹

The Colehours acquired land on a knoll above West Battle Lake, and constructed a picturesque gabled house that replicated their Chicago home for a cost of about \$800. Cap established a business partnership with E. A. Everts, an acquaintance from the war, and went into the lumber business. When their eldest son, Jamie, aged six years old, came upon a "traveling man" who couldn't find a room in town, he offered his own room at the house. Although Kate was not immediately enthralled with the idea of operating a hotel, Cap was intrigued by the opportunity. After several years of renting rooms to travelers, the Colehours constructed a side-gabled addition to the "Chicago house," and opened the Prospect House hotel in 1887.² The new addition, although unpretentious, was large in comparison to the Chicago house, to which it was attached. The wood-framed building clad with clapboard had two-stories plus a finished attic with dormers.

By that time, Battle Lake was becoming a destination for summer vacationers from southern states seeking a cooler climate and outdoor recreation. When Prospect House opened, the Lake View House was already operating, and advertised a livery stable, and that "no pains [would] be spared by the proprietor to provide for the comfort of guests."³ George H. Willie, "the boatman," coordinated "pleasure parties, fishing parties, and hunting parties," and offered visitors boats, fishing tackle, and scenic picnic grounds.⁴ A review of the new Prospect House boasted that it was nearer to the lake than any of the other hotels and its landlord, James A. Colehour, was "that prince of good fellows, ardent sportsman,

1 "Celebrating 57th Wedding Anniversary," *Battle Lake Review*, May 2, 1929; "J.A. Colehour, Who Served in 30 Battles, Dies at Battle Lake," *Battle Lake Review*, December 27, 1938.

2 "Prospect Inn Still Has Old Appeal," *Fergus Falls Journal*, August 14, 1975.

3 "Lake View House," *Battle Lake Review*, May 26, 1887.

4 "Geo. H. Willie," *Battle Lake Review*, May 26, 1887.

Prospect House

Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota

County and State

keen business man, and leading citizen.”⁵ The Prospect House could accommodate up to 100 guests in 27 rooms at \$2.00 per day. In a promotional brochure, probably from the 1880s, Colehour offered this promise to his guests:

To eat, drink, sleep and breathe pure air will be your great desire, but you can row, fish, drive, hunt, bowl, or lounge, as seemeth best; and the best of these is sleep, for the tired body and weary mind will here recuperate beyond your greatest hopes.⁶

In addition to serving on the school board, and as city clerk, alderman, justice of the peace, president of the light company, and four-term mayor, Cap, along with Kate, operated the hotel for 38 years.⁷ In about 1902, the family constructed a small cottage on the adjacent lot, just south of the inn, where the Colehours raised their four children, and would live out their days. The cottage was called the “San Juan” house in commemoration of Theodore Roosevelt’s battle in the Spanish-American War. Cap admired Roosevelt, and his son, James, is reported to be a hunting buddy of the President.⁸

A House Revived

In 1925, at the respective ages of 90 and 80, Cap and Kate Colehour gave up the active management of the hotel, turning it over to their only daughter, Kathrina and her husband Ernest C. Wilkins. In 1929, the Wilkins acquired the inn and set about making it into a large single family home through a major remodeling.

Ernest Wilkins (1885-1971), was born in Mayfield, New York, where his family was associated with the Wilkins Glove Company, in Gloversville. Wilkins moved to Minnesota in 1907 and managed the Oakwood Stock Farm, an acquisition of his father’s. He and Kathrina Colehour wed on March 2, 1911 in Battle Lake. After farming for several years, the family returned to Battle Lake in 1921.⁹ In the late 1920s, Wilkins received a substantial inheritance, precipitating several significant changes in the couple’s lives. E.C. Wilkins purchased stock in the First State Bank of Battle Lake, and became its president.¹⁰ Second, the couple acquired the Prospect Inn, and set about remaking it into a “substantial” family home, at an estimated cost of \$20,000.¹¹

The make-over of the house entailed the removal of the original “Chicago house,” which was moved from the property and relocated a short distance across Lake Avenue. What had been a large hotel addition would become the Wilkins’ new home. They hired the Fergus Falls architecture firm of Broaten and Foss to complete the exterior and interior changes in the Georgian Revival style. John Lauritzen Company, a prolific Fergus Falls firm, served as builder. On the interior, the inn’s dining room became a large living room, while the office was converted to a family dining room, and the children’s dining room became the kitchen. The lodging rooms on the second floor were entirely reconfigured into four bedrooms and two bathrooms, but the third story attic remained largely untouched. One-story wings on the north and south ends created a porte-cochere and sun parlor, respectively. Furnishings throughout the house were ordered from Dayton’s Department Store in Minneapolis. Although the overall form and massing of the exterior essentially remained the same, the material and details were drastically changed. The walls were clad with a new wood clapboard siding painted white, windows were reconfigured, and the gabled roof dormers were remodeled into rounded arches. Details such as fluted pilasters, Classical cornice, and elaborate center door surround clearly established the home as one of excelled taste in the Georgian Revival style. The doorway surround was even a precise replica of the Kathrina Wilkins’ ancestral Colonial-era home in Deerfield, Massachusetts. Several articles in the local newspapers described the property’s illustrious history, and its remodeling “to a palatial three story Colonial mansion,” which would be “one of the most attractive and

⁵ “Battle Lake,” *Battle Lake Review*, May 26, 1887.

⁶ “Chippewa Chips,” promotional pamphlet for The Prospect House, c. 1890.

⁷ “Celebrating 57th Wedding Anniversary,” *Battle Lake Review*, May 2, 1929.

⁸ Jay Johnson, interview with author, September 12, 2012.

⁹ “E.C. Wilkins Dies, Rites Held Monday,” *Battle Lake Review*, January 1, 1971; Denis P. Gardner, “Historic-Architectural Assessment, Prospect House,” 2004, 9.

¹⁰ “E.C. Wilkins President of First State Bank,” *Battle Lake Review*, June 20, 1929.

¹¹ “Wilkins [sic] Home To Be Beautiful,” *Fergus Falls Journal*, April 18, 1929.

Prospect House

Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota

County and State

substantial residence properties in the county.”¹² The property became known as “Prospect House,” after its predecessor hotel, which had been known both as the “Prospect House” and the “Prospect Inn” during its period of use.

Colonial Revival and Reviving as Colonial

When Ernest and Kathrina Wilkins remodeled the house in 1929, it was a thorough transformation to the Georgian Revival style, which was both a popular style at the time and a specific link to the family’s Colonial era heritage. Broadly speaking, the Colonial Revival style can take on many forms, depending on its region of inspiration. Spanish influences, for example, became the norm for revival buildings in Florida and the southwest, while adobe traditions were revived in New Mexico. The Georgian Revival style was particularly popular in the eastern states, where the historical precedents could readily be found.¹³ With the growth in popularity, the easily replicated style spread in the twentieth century to locations, like Minnesota, where indigenous examples of colonial architecture never existed. The Georgian strain of the Colonial Revival style is characterized by a symmetrical façade, with a central front door, emphasized by a pediment, pilasters, sidelight or overhead fanlight. Windows are composed of multi-light double-hung sash, with a balanced arrangement, frequently in adjacent pairs. Cornices are often elaborated with decorative trim, and chimneys are used to emphasize symmetry. Roofs may be gabled, hipped or gambrel. After 1910, the two-story, side-gabled roof, rectangular block form became dominant.¹⁴

Rather than simply borrowing architectural elements from historical periods applied in unusual and exaggerated fashion during the Victorian era, designers working with Colonial Revival styles were attentive to recreating a somewhat authentic representation of the historical precedent. The education of architects and their exposure to European travel gave inspiration for original plans that would appear as an authentic example of a period house. Rest assured, the designers and their clients were in a modern world, so authenticity had its limits. Interior arrangements reflected modern living patterns, and accommodations were made for electricity, plumbing and automobile garages.¹⁵

The Colonial Revival style has experienced a particularly long period of popularity in the United States, from the 1880s into the 1950s, and beyond. Although hints of the revival of interest in the architecture and design of the Colonial era can be traced as far back as 1828, when Philadelphia’s Independence Hall tower was constructed in a manner believed to be fitting for its historic significance, the widespread popularity of the style is generally attributed to the work of the taste-making architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White. Their 1877 trip along the New England coast in search of authentic colonial buildings informed and inspired their practice in the following decades. Their wood-framed, clapboard Taylor House (1885-1886) in Newport, Rhode Island was the progenitor of revival styled houses of the twentieth century.¹⁶ Thanks to the work of McKim, Mead and White, the style was among the favored choices for their wealthy, east-coast clients in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The style came to be embraced by the broader public throughout the nation.

The Colonial Revival style dominated the architectural discussion in publications during the first decades of the twentieth century. Thousands of articles extolled the virtues of life in an “antique” home, and featured richly illustrated scenes of costumed characters in front of an open hearth. Robert and Elizabeth Shackleton wrote such bestselling books as *The Quest for the Colonial* (1907) and *The Charm of the Antique* (1914) in an attempt to seduce their readers into “the glamour and mystery of the past.” As early as 1922, the classicism of the Colonial era was described as a “permanent national style” in Fiske Kimball’s *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and Early Republic*. The reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg, begun in the late 1920s with funding from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., helped to

12 “First Summer Hotel Being Replaced,” *Battle Lake Review*, April 25, 1929; “Wilkens [sic] Home To Be Beautiful,” *Fergus Falls Journal*, April 18, 1929.

13 Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture A History* (Boulder, Colorado: Icon Editions/Westview Press, 2001), 347, 352.

14 Virginia Macalester and Lee Macalester *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 321-324; Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), 159-160.

15 Roth, *American Architecture*, 346-350.

16 Richard Guy Wilson, “What Is the Colonial Revival?,” in *Re-creating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival*, ed. Richard Guy Wilson (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 4; Whiffen, *American Architecture*, 160.

Prospect House

Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota

County and State

fortify the message that the architecture of the early colonial Europeans was a fitting, if nostalgic, design idiom for modern America. Between 1910 and 1950, the colonial aesthetic could be seen in the majority of America's houses at all income levels.¹⁷ Detractors of the style remained at the most elite level. Frank Lloyd Wright called the "Colonial pretense" "foolish," and critic Lewis Mumford complained the antiquated style had "little to do with living architecture."¹⁸ Still, nearly 50 percent of all houses shown in architectural magazines between 1922 and 1925 illustrated aspects of the Colonial Revival style.¹⁹

The Wilkins' approach to the Prospect House was a major remodeling venture, transforming the Victorian-era structure into a home of proper style and sophistication reflecting the fashion of the day. Architectural historian Betsy Hunter Bradley documented the national phenomenon of "reviving as colonial," as well as reviving authentic Colonial houses. Based on popular literature of the era, Bradley writes that remodeling outdated Victorians was considered an act of public service, and ironically, a statement of modernity. As with the Prospect House, these renovation projects were frequently major undertakings. A 1906 *Country Life* magazine article included among the changes to one house, removing an addition and all of the porches, rotating the house a quarter turn, and adding a two-story porch with classical columns.²⁰ Robert and Elizabeth Shackleton also advocated for similar transformations in their 1910 book, *Adventures in Home-Making* in which they described their effort in remodeling their Victorian home. Their undertaking encompassed ridding the house of offending appendages and the "monstrously ugly bay window," and making "unsightly things... slightly."²¹ Even Emily Post, the arbiter of etiquette, advocated for updating houses in the Colonial mode. An ugly Victorian, or "wood-Lizzie" as she put it, could be transformed into a home a great beauty with the application of Colonial Revival principles.²²

Whether the Wilkins had read any of the advising literature on reviving their home as Colonial is not known, but they were clearly influenced by the growing tide of Colonial Revival taste-makers of the previous decades, as well as their interest with their own early American roots. The Wilkins didn't simply adopt a general Colonial motif, but made specific reference to Kathrina Wilkins' great-grandmother's home, the Joseph Stebbins House in Deerfield, Massachusetts.²³ The local newspaper reported that the "extensive alterations" would result in "one of the most attractive and substantial residence properties in the county" and was a "reproduction" of Kathrina Colehour Wilkins' ancestor's 1772 home.²⁴ While not a reproduction – the fact that the Wilkins were working with an existing structure prevented genuine authenticity – the façade largely replicates the overall design of the historic structure: a two-story elevation with a central entry flanked by paired windows on the upper and lower stories. The door surround of the Stebbins house – where the greatest elaboration of details is on display – was faithfully reproduced on the Battle Lake house. The Wilkins did not go so far as to replicate the gambrel roof, corner quoins, or chimney placement of the original. Other accommodations were made for the modern family, including a sun parlor, porte-cochere, and dormers.

Broaten and Foss Architects, John Lauritzen Company

To remodel the house, the Wilkins selected the Fergus Falls-based architectural firm of Broaten and Foss. The commission for the "Residence of E. C. Wilkins" was assigned Job No. 6 on plans dated April 10, 1929. Based on selected invoices, Broaten appears to be the partner principally assigned to the Wilkins commission. Einar Broaten²⁵ (c. 1885-1948) was born in Norway, where he studied architecture. He immigrated to Mason City, Iowa and around 1912 began work with the architectural firm of Jeffers & Co. with J. H. Jeffers. His early work shows strong influences of the

17 Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004), 89-92.

18 Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, 11.

19 Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, 89.

20 Betsy Hunter Bradley, "Reviving Colonials and Reviving as Colonial," in *Re-creating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival*, ed. Richard Guy Wilson (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 173.

21 Robert Shackleton and Elizabeth Shackleton, *Adventures in Home-Making* (New York: John Lane Company, 1910. Google eBook edition), 30.

22 Bradley, "Reviving Colonials and Reviving as Colonial," 177.

23 The Joseph Stebbins House is recorded in the Historic American Building Survey, No. MASS-652.

24 "Wilkins Home to be Beautiful," *Fergus Falls Journal*, April 18, 1929.

25 Broaten's name is sometimes listed as Braaten, or as the firm, Braaten and Foss.

Prospect House

Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota

County and State

Prairie style, and can be seen in the Senior house (1912) and the Samuel Davis Drake house (1914), both of Mason City. Broaten briefly became a partner with Jeffers in 1915, but departed that collaboration two years later, and worked on his own and in partnership with local contractors for the next ten years.²⁶ In 1927, he moved to Fergus Falls, Minnesota where he formed his partnership with Magnus O. Foss as Broaten and Foss Co. As a firm, they were responsible for designing a number of buildings in west central Minnesota in a variety of styles.

Their early Minnesota work as a firm included high school auditorium additions in Gary and Starbuck, a creamery in Brandon, and Montgomery Ward buildings in Brainerd and Willmar.²⁷ During the Depression of the 1930s, many of their projects were funded by federal relief programs, such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Broaten is named as the architect for District School No. 182 (Barnhard School) (listed in the National Register) in nearby Sverdrup Township in Otter Tail County. This unique building, completed in 1940, employs the Moderne style, executed in distinctive local field stone. Other WPA-era buildings designed by the firm include a school auditorium and gym addition in Ulen, a school in Edgerton, the Clearwater County Courthouse, the Bemidji High School, a school building in Gary, a high school auditorium addition in Underwood, and the Milan Village Hall.²⁸ Other examples of the firm's work include the Benson Block in Fergus Falls, and several Moderne houses in Fergus Falls and St. Cloud.²⁹

Broaten's partnership with Foss probably ended sometime in the late 1930s or early 1940s. His life ended in 1948 at the age of 63 due to an apparent accident. After reported missing in February, his body was discovered nine weeks later in the Otter Tail River in Fergus Falls pinned against the Northern Pacific Railway bridge.³⁰

Magnus O. Foss (c. 1897-1988) was the son of a Norwegian immigrant and Minnesota architect, Andrew H. Foss. The elder Foss was responsible for the design of numerous buildings, including churches, schools, houses, and commercial buildings in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. After studying at the Chicago Technical Institute, Magnus joined his father's firm as Foss and Foss in Elbow Lake, Minnesota in 1916. Following service in the army during World War I, he resumed his career in 1919. After his father died in 1921, he formed a partnership with Anton Jensen in Minneapolis. This union lasted until 1927, when he moved to Fergus Falls to join forces with Broaten. Foss would later form a firm with his son, Magnus Jr., Foss-Engelstad-Foss, in Moorhead, Minnesota. As other sons joined the firm, it became Foss Associates Architecture Engineering and Interiors of Fargo-Moorhead. Magnus Foss Sr. died at age 91 in Arizona City, Arizona.³¹

The architects worked with the John Lauritzen Co. as the contractor for the remodeling. John Lauritzen (1863-1929) was a Danish-born carpenter who settled in Fergus Falls in 1887. Among his first commissions was construction of the massive state hospital building in that city. The firm erected many of the houses and commercial buildings in Fergus Falls and Otter Tail County, and specialized in public buildings in Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas.³² The Prospect House project was completed during the year of John Lauritzen's death at the age of 66; it is not known to what extent Lauritzen himself was involved with his company or the project.

26 Wesley I. Shank, *Iowa's Historic Architects A Biographical Dictionary* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 30; Larson "Introduction: the Prairie School in Its Midwestern Setting," in *Prairie School Architecture in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Museum of Art at Landmark Center, 1982), 10.

27 "Plans for Several Large Buildings in Surrounding Country," *Fergus Falls Journal*, April 18, 1929.

28 Rolf T. Anderson, "District No. 182 School," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (on file at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, October 1990), 8:2-3.

29 Michael Koop, "Becker County Courthouse," Minnesota Architecture-History inventory form (on file at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, July 1987).

30 "Body of Local Man Is Found in River," *Fergus Falls Journal*, April 16, 1948.

31 Denis P. Gardner, "Lakeland Hotel," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, (on file at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, May 2011); "M.O. Foss, Longtime Area Architect, Dies," *Fargo Forum*, January 28, 1988; "Architect Magnus Foss Still Active at Age 82," *Grant County Herald*, November 23, 1978.

32 John W. Mason, *History of Otter Tail County, Minnesota* (Indianapolis, Indiana: B. F. Bowen & Company, Inc., 1916), 666.

Prospect House

Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota

County and State

A House Preserved

The timing of the Wilkins' inheritance and expenditure of funds for the house and other business ventures was unfortunate. The stock market crash in October 1929 and the ensuing economic depression resulted in the loss of their inherited fortune. The grandson of E. C. and Kathrina Wilkins, Jay Johnson, recalls his mother, Kathryn Wilkins Johnson saying, "we were rich for two years." Ernest Wilkins returned to his agricultural pursuits, and became known for his gladiola and iris gardens on the west lots of the property. Ernest and Kathrina remained in the mansion, changing it very little, until their deaths in 1971 and 1965, respectively.³³

Their daughter Kathryn "Kay" Wilkins Johnson, who was raised in the house, returned to Prospect House in 1974 with her husband, Vernon Johnson. Kay was a talented artist and interior designer.³⁴ The couple made some minor changes to the house, including redecorating, updating the kitchen, and lowering kitchen windows and counters. Vernon reported he applied 57 coats of paint inside the house to cover the "streaks of old water colors Cap applied."³⁵ Upon Kay's death in 2008 (Vernon died in 2003), ownership of the property was turned over to her son, Jay Johnson, the fourth generation to own Prospect House. The house is now operated as a Civil War and house museum by the Friends of Prospect House, formed in 2010. Its mission is to tell the story of Cap Colehour through the family collection and house in order to achieve greater understanding and appreciation for an early and important time in the nation's history.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

33 "E.C. Wilkins Dies, Rites Held Monday," *Battle Lake Review*, January 1, 1971; "Mrs. E.C. Wilkins Dies, Rites Tuesday," *Battle Lake Review*, March 11, 1965.

34 "Kathryn Johnson Obituary," *Fergus Falls Journal*, August 27, 2008.

35 "Prospect Inn Still Has Old Appeal," *Fergus Falls Journal*, August 14, 1975.

Prospect House
Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Anderson, Rolf T. "District No. 182 School." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. On file at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, October 1990.

Battle Lake Review. Various Dates.

Bradley, Betsy Hunter. "Reviving Colonials and Reviving as Colonial." In *Re-creating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival*, edited by Richard Guy Wilson, 167-179. Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2006.

"Chippewa Chips," promotional brochure for Battle Lake, Minnesota. On file at the Prospect House and Civil War Museum, Battle Lake, Minnesota. c. 1890.

Fargo Forum. "M.O. Foss, Longtime Area Architect, Dies." January 28, 1988.

Fergus Falls Journal. Various Dates.

Gardner, Denis P.. "Historic-Architectural Assessment, Prospect House, Battle Lake, Minnesota." Report prepared for the Fergus Fall HRA, Fergus Falls Minnesota. On file at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, 2004.

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Mason, John W. *History of Otter Tail County, Minnesota*. Indianapolis, Indiana: B. F. Bowen & Company, Inc., 1916.

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Shackleton, Robert, and Elizabeth Shackleton. *Adventures in Home-Making*. New York: John Lane Company, 1910. Google eBook edition.

Shank, Wesley I. *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999.

Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992.

Prospect House
Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota
County and State

Wilson, Richard Guy. *The Colonial Revival House*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004.

_____. "What Is the Colonial Revival?," in *Re-creating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival*, edited by Richard Guy Wilson, 1-10. Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2006.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): OT-BLC-010

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.6
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	290879	5129368	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is sited on an L-shaped parcel, comprised of the north 40 feet of Lot 9, north 40 feet of Lot 11, and all of Lots 12 and 13, of Block 26, of Bowman and Dunton's Addition to the Village of Battle Lake, Minnesota.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is inclusive of the contributing buildings, and encompasses the parcels purchased by E.C. and Kathrina Wilkins in January 1929 from James A. and Kate C. Colehour.

Prospect House
Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William E. Stark
organization Stark Preservation Planning LLC Date November 2012
street & number 2840 43rd Ave S telephone 651-353-2628
city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55406
e-mail will@starkpreservation.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Prospect House

City or Vicinity: Battle Lake

County: Otter Tail State: Minnesota

Photographer: William E. Stark

Date Photographed: September 15, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo 1 of 7
MN_Otter Tail County_Prospect House_0001
Prospect House looking northwest

Photo 2 of 7
MN_Otter Tail County_Prospect House_0002
Prospect House looking southeast

Photo 3 of 7
MN_Otter Tail County_Prospect House_0003
Prospect House cornice, pilaster, window and rainwater head detail

Prospect House
Name of Property

Otter Tail, Minnesota
County and State

Photo 4 of 7
MN_Otter Tail County_Prospect House_0004
Prospect House dining room looking north

Photo 5 of 7
MN_Otter Tail County_Prospect House_0005
Prospect House center hall and stairway looking west

Photo 6 of 7
MN_Otter Tail County_Prospect House_0006
Prospect House garage looking northwest

Photo 7 of 7
MN_Otter Tail County_Prospect House_0007
Prospect House Play House looking southwest

Property Owner:

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

name Jay Johnson
street & number 403 Lake Ave N. telephone 218-864-8606
city or town Battle Lake state MN zip code 56515

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.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Prospect House
Name of Property
Otter Tail County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation Page 1

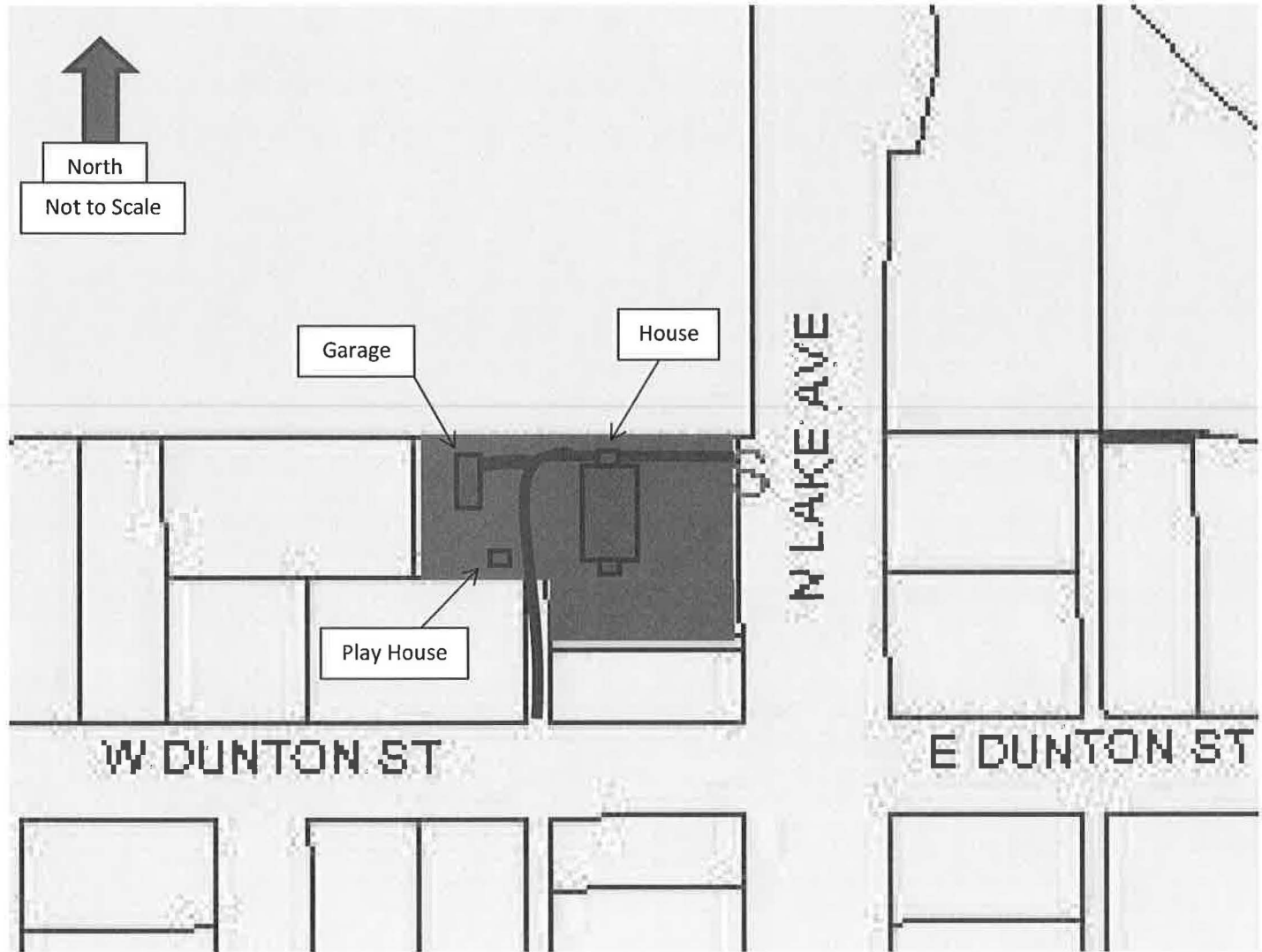


Figure 1. Prospect House Sketch Map. Otter Tail County, 2012.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Prospect House
Name of Property
Otter Tail County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation Page 2

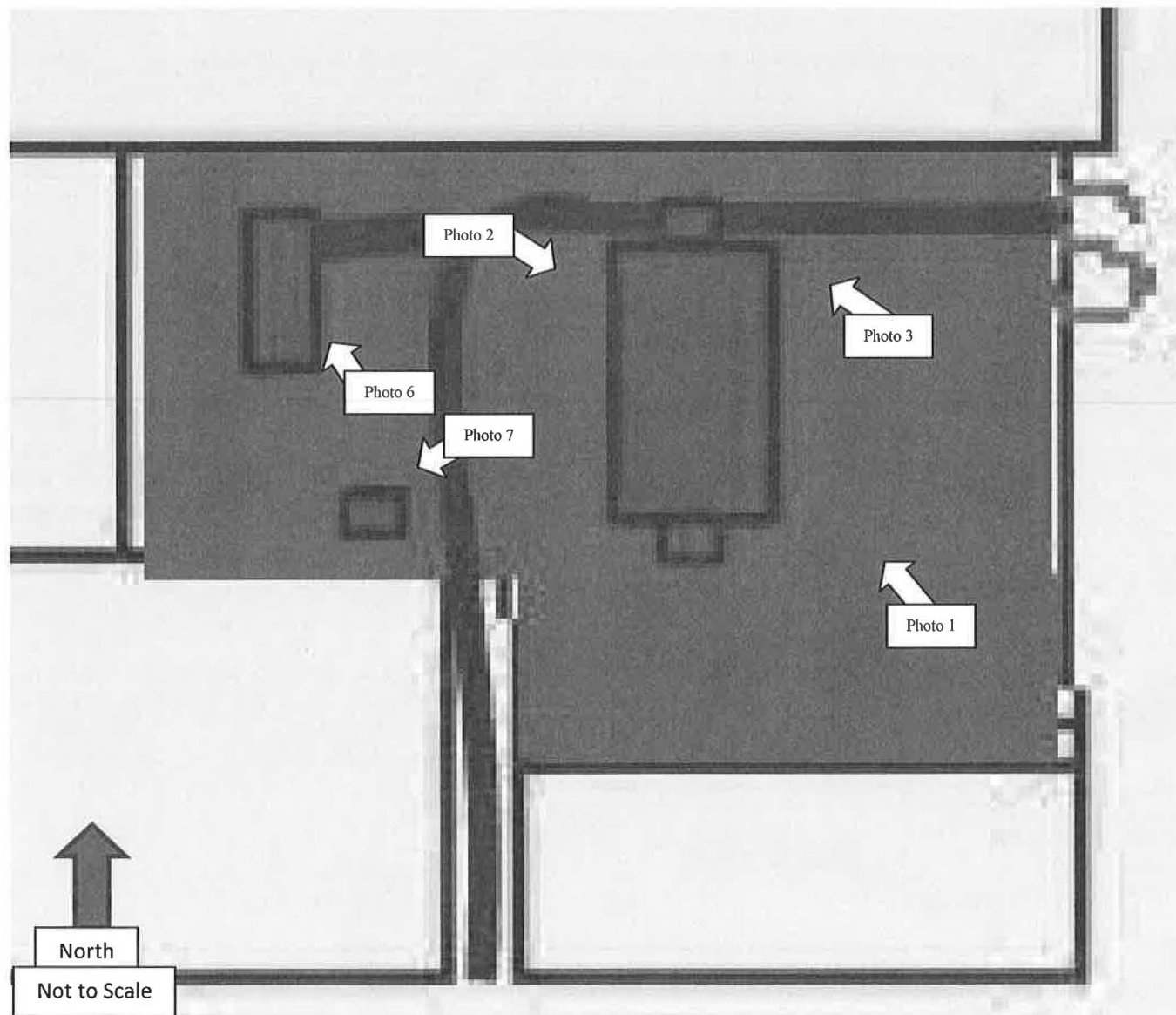


Figure 2. Prospect House Sketch Map with Photographic Key. Otter Tail County, 2012.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Prospect House
Name of Property
Otter Tail County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation Page 3

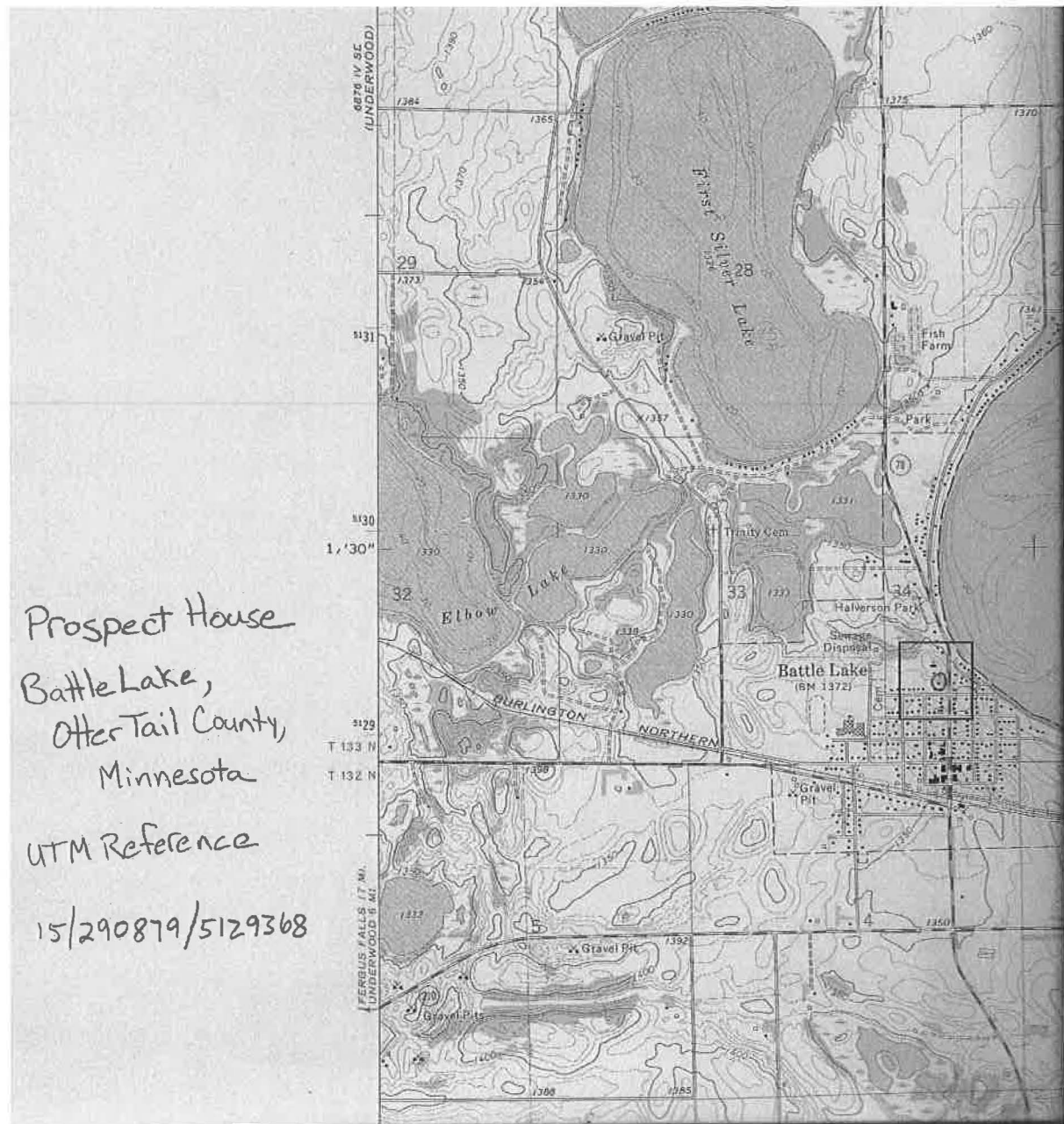


Figure 3. Prospect House. USGS 7.5 Minute Series Topographic Map, Battle Lake, Minnesota Quadrangle. 1973.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Prospect House

Name of Property

Otter Tail County, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation Page 4



Figure 4. Prospect House , c. 1887. The original "Chicago House" is seen on the right, with the large 1887 hotel wing added to its rear, on the left. Source: Prospect House and Civil War Museum.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Prospect House
Name of Property
Otter Tail County, Minnesota
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)
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Additional Documentation Page 5

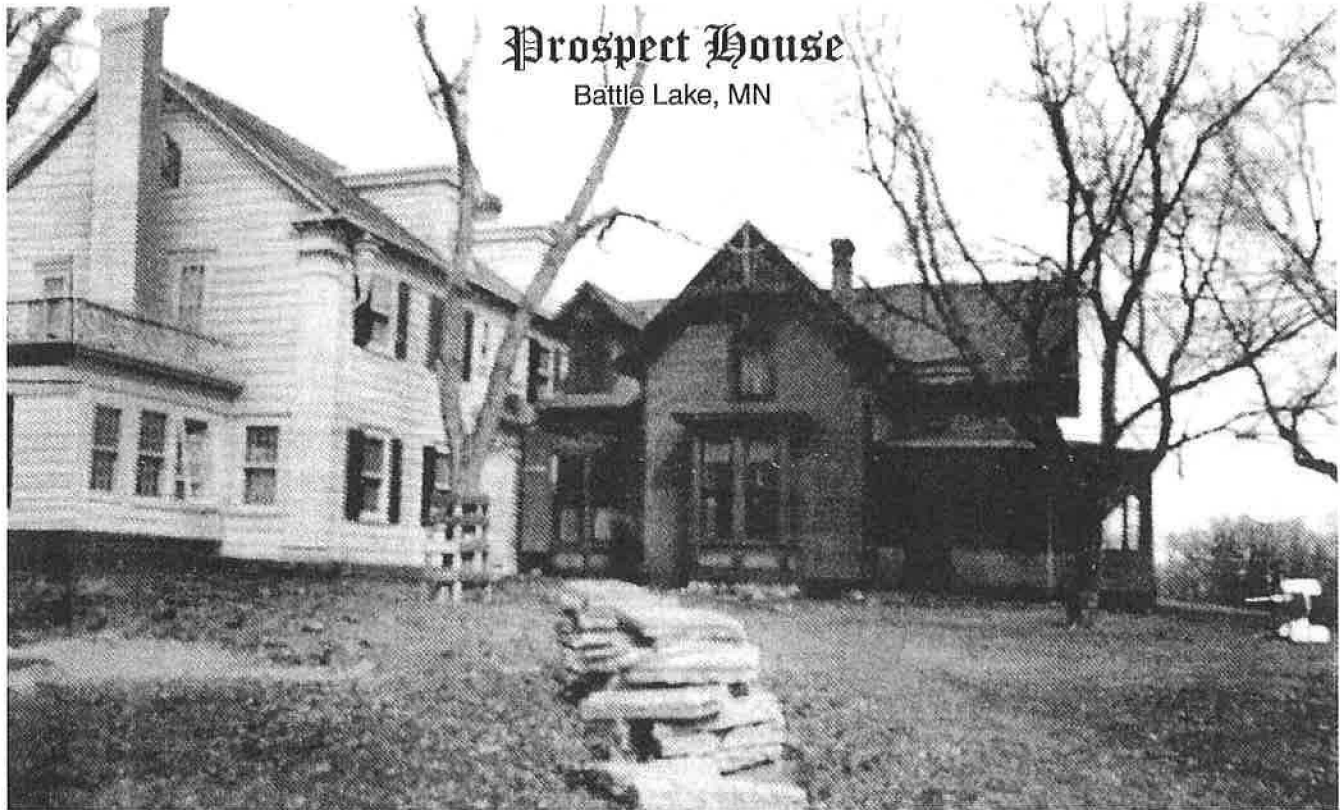


Figure 5. Prospect House c. 1929. The Prospect House's hotel wing's remodeling had been mostly completed, but the "Chicago House" remained in place before being moved to its current location on North Lake Avenue, Battle Lake. Source: Prospect House and Civil War Museum, postcard reproduction.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Prospect House
Name of Property
Otter Tail County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation Page 6



Figure 6. Prospect House, c. 1933. Source: Prospect House and Civil War Museum.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Prospect House
Name of Property
Otter Tail County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation Page 7



Figure 7. Prospect House, c. 1930. Source: Prospect House and Civil War Museum.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Prospect House
Name of Property
Otter Tail County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation Page 8

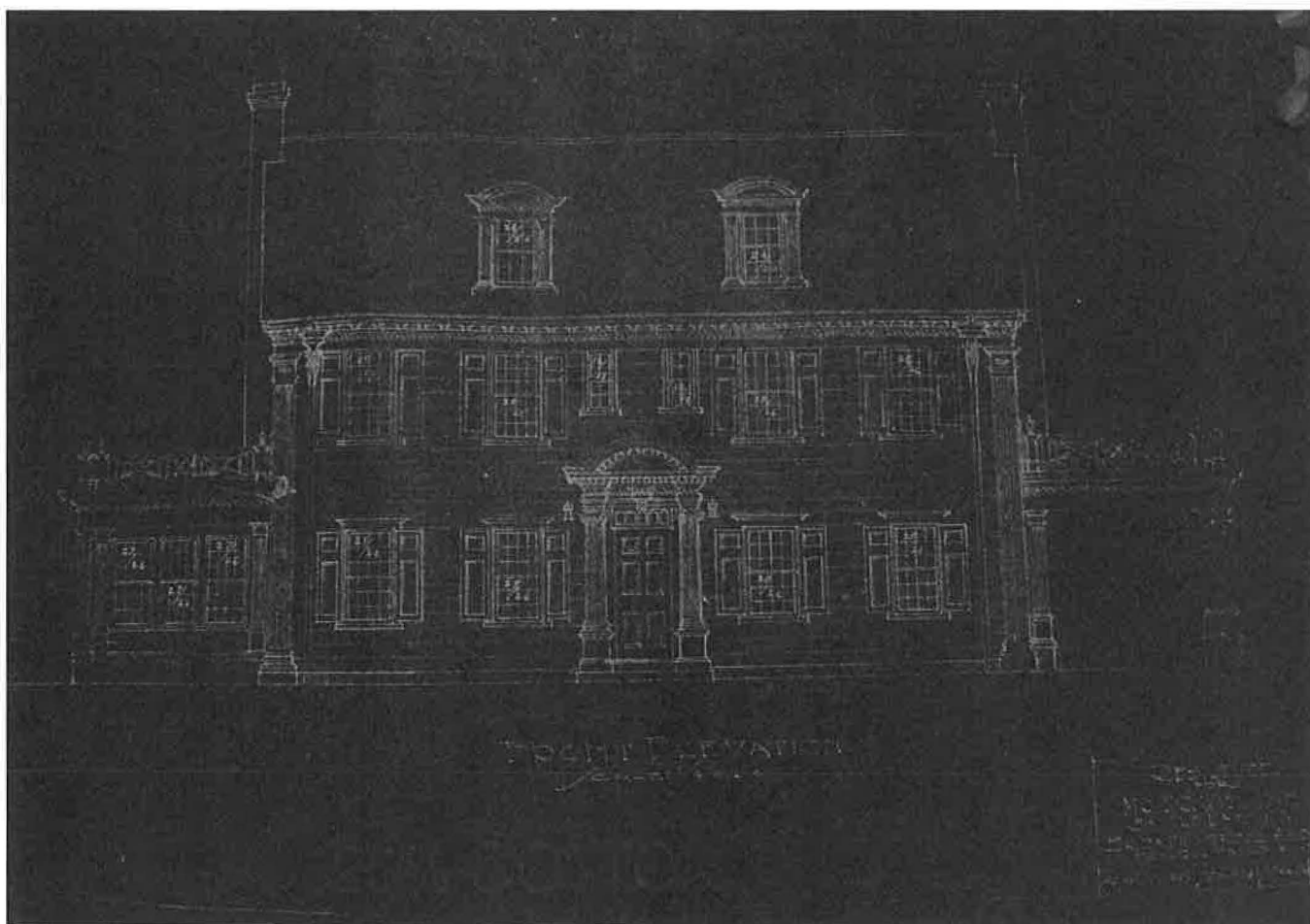


Figure 8. Mr. E. C. Wilkins Residence, Front Elevation. Broaten and Foss, Architects. Job No. 6, dated April 10, 1929. Source: Prospect House and Civil War Museum.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Prospect House
Name of Property
Otter Tail County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation Page 9

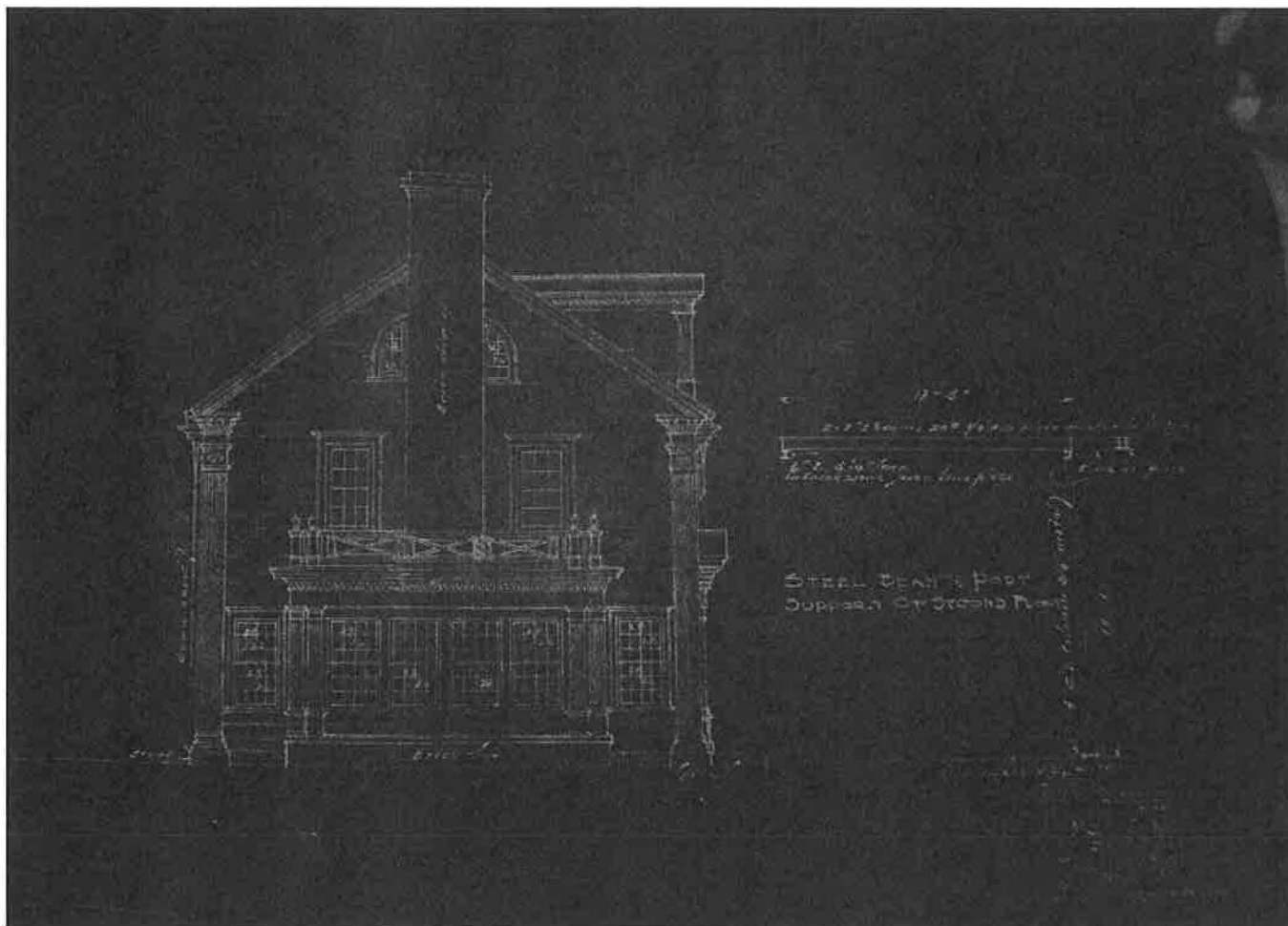
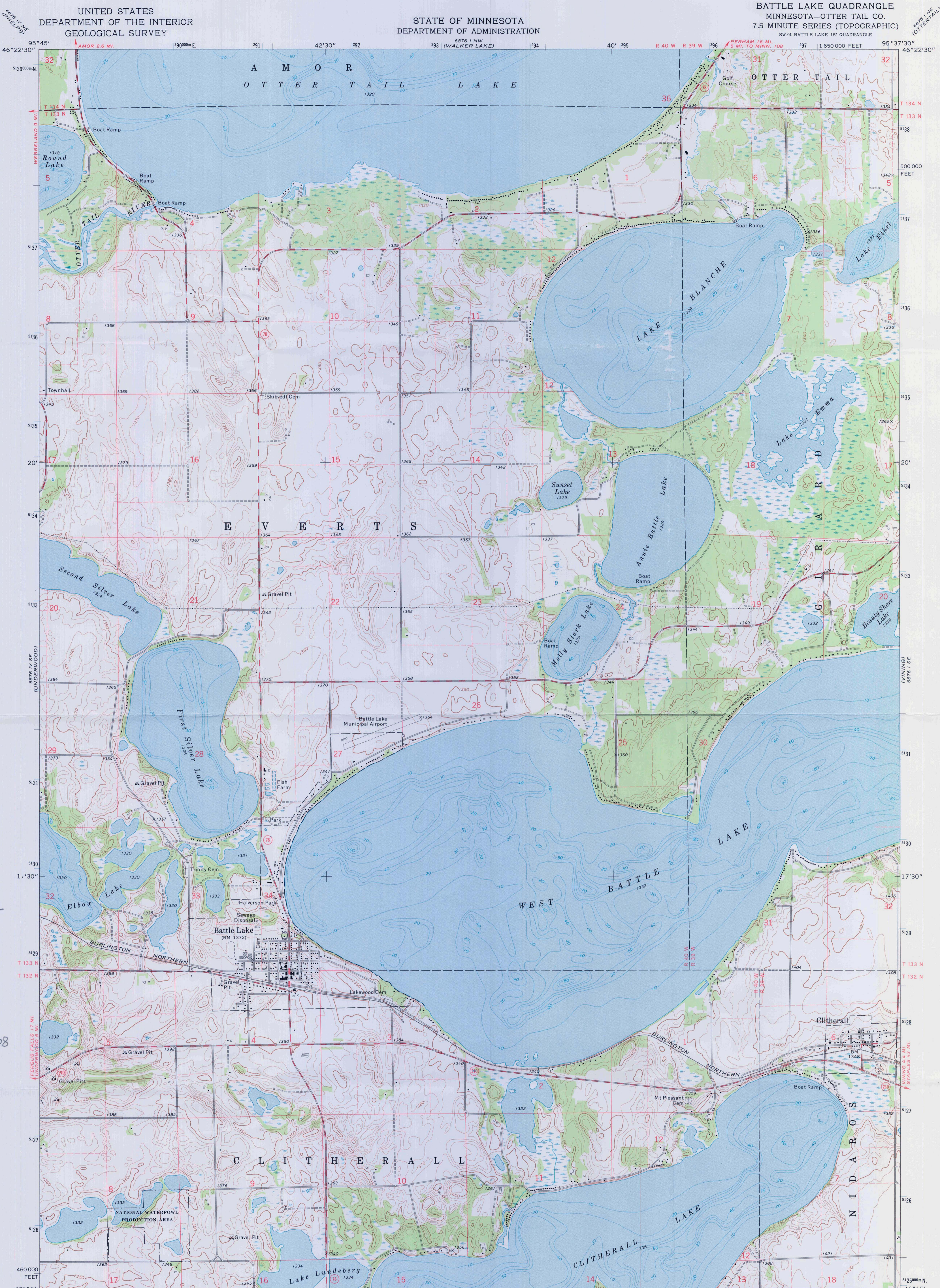
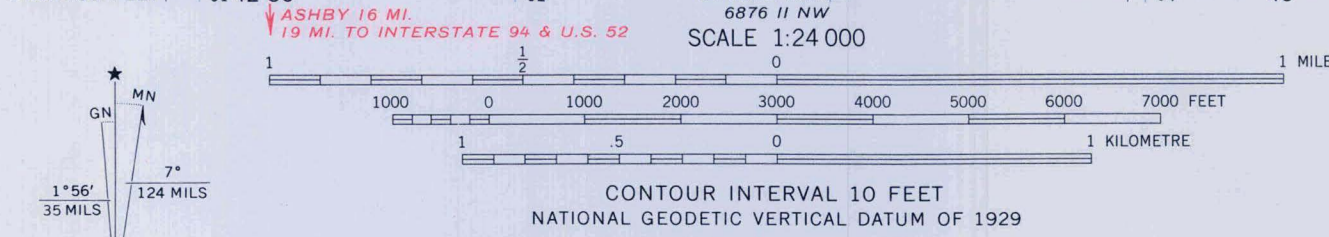


Figure 9. Mr. E. C. Wilkins Residence, End Elevation. Broaten and Foss, Architects. Job No. 6, dated April 10, 1929. Source: Prospect House and Civil War Museum.



Prospect House
Battle Lake,
Otter Tail County,
Minnesota
UTM Reference
15/290879/5129368

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1972. Field checked 1973
Hydrography compiled from information furnished by
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Minnesota coordinate
system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue. 1927 North American datum
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

BATTLE LAKE, MINN.
SW/4 BATTLE LAKE 15' QUADRANGLE
N4615-W9537.5/7.5
1973
AMS 6876 I SW—SERIES V872

217C















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Prospect House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MINNESOTA, Otter Tail

DATE RECEIVED: 4/12/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/06/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/21/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/29/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000326

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 5.29.13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Minnesota Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102
651/259-3451



TO: Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Denis P. Gardner

DATE: April 4, 2013

NAME OF PROPERTY: Prospect House

COUNTY AND STATE: Otter Tail County, Minnesota

SUBJECT: National Register:
 Nomination
 Multiple Property Documentation Form
 Request for determination of eligibility
 Request for removal (Reference No.)
 Nomination resubmission
 Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.)
 Additional documentation (Reference No.)

DOCUMENTATION:

- Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
 - Multiple Property Documentation Form
 - Continuation Sheets
 - Removal Documentation
 - Photographs
 - CD w/ image files
 - Original USGS Map
 - Sketch map(s)
 - Correspondence
 - Owner Objection
- The enclosed owner objections
Do Do not constitute a majority of property owners

STAFF COMMENTS:

THE CITY OF
Battle Lake

108 Main St. E.
P.O. Box 386
Battle Lake, MN
56515-0386

February 15, 2013

Secretary, State Review Board
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Blvd. W
St Paul MN 55102-1906

This letter is to confirm the City of Battle Lake's interest in the nomination of the Prospect House to the National Register of Historic Places. We strongly believe this property is unique in that its storied history has been so carefully preserved and chronicles life in this area in an unprecedented manner. Preservation of these notable structures will benefit the entire community.

The Prospect House compound provides an opportunity to become a significant cultural and historical anchor in our community that will be of value to students, residents and visitors. It is certainly a benefit as we currently proceed with economic development and community-building, to have the ability to acknowledge the efforts of those who came before us.

In conclusion, the City of Battle Lake, MN, fully supports the mission and efforts of the Prospect House as they seek nomination to the National Register and pursue a status that will educate, preserve and share a piece of history gone by, but not forgotten.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Charles M Reeve, Mayor

Phone/Fax 218-864-0424
TTY 1-800-627-3529
www.ci.battle-lake.mn.us

An Equal Opportunity Employer