United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

code



Second

127

code

congressional district

Porter

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

1. Name

historic

The Weller House

and/or common The Old Prison Farm

2. Location

street & number	1200 North Road, 5 miles east of Chesterton	N/A_ not for publication

county

018

city, town Chesterton μ_{c} , <u>X</u> vicinity of

state

3. Classification

Indiana

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
district	public	occupied	agriculture	museum
\underline{X} building(s)	<u>X</u> private	unoccupied	commercial	park
structure	both	_X_ work in progress	educational	private residence
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	entertainment	religious
object	in process	yes: restricted	government	scientific
	being considered	yes: unrestricted	industrial	transportation
	NA	<u> X </u> no	military	X

4. Owner of Property

name	Joseph and S	andra Gersna			
street &	number R. 1, Box 44	9			
city, tow	n Chesterton	<u>N/A</u> vicinity of	state	Indiana	46304
5. L	ocation of	Legal Description			
courthou	use, registry of deeds, etc.	County Recorder			
street &	number	Porter County Courthouse			
city, tow	n	Valparaiso	state	Indiana	
6. F	Representat	ion in Existing Su	rveys		
title	N/A	has this property	v been determined el	egible?	_yes _X_ no
date			federal sta	te cou	nty local
denosito	ry for survey records	1/4			

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition		Check one
excellent	_X deteriorated	unaltered
good	ruins	_X altered
fair	unexposed	

Check one _X_ original site moved date .

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

_ unaltered

The Weller House is located on a 4.1 acre plot on the Old Burdick Road, five miles east of Chesterton. The plot contains a milk house and woodshed due north of the house. A large barn is located farther north. Northeast of the house is a brick dormitory and a chicken coop. The Weller House, situated on a high knoll in the southeastern section of the plot, has its main entrance on the south side facing Burdick Road.

The two story, frame, Italianate structure is believed to have been built c. 1870. The plan of the house is rectangular, consisting of a middle section flanked by projecting wings. An additional wing has been added to the east section of the house. The house is covered by a hipped roof which is characteristic of the Italianate style. Outstanding characteristics of the house include the details of the main entrance portico, round-cornered window frames and sashes, and the arched hood moldings surmounting nearly every window of the structure.

The foundation of the house is constructed of painted brick. The first floor of the south elevation contains a main entrance, to the east of a pair of windows. The double, glazed doors are covered by a small canopy, supported by large, elaborately carved brackets which are accented by pendants. Paired windows to the west of the door are of one-over-one configuration and are doublehung sash. A wooden sill and a single, straight window hood with curved corners, corbel stops and central keystone design embrace the pair of windows.

Immediately above these windows is an identical pair of windows on the second floor. To the east of this window, above the door, is a single, one-over-one, doublehung sash window with hood molding. A plain, wide frieze with pairs of brackets accentuates the eaves of the hipped roof.

The west elevation is characterized by the same elements as the south: one-over-one doublehung sash windows, with decorative hood moldings aligned on the first and second stories; and eaves decorated by a wide frieze and double brackets.

The north elevation contains no surface penetrations at its western-most end. A brick chimney begins at the foundation of the house and extends well beyond the roof. The chimney is painted from foundation to roof level. Above the level of the roof, however, the chimney is left unpainted. East of the chimney is a series of three windows on the first floor aligned with windows on the second floor. All windows are adorned with hood moldings.

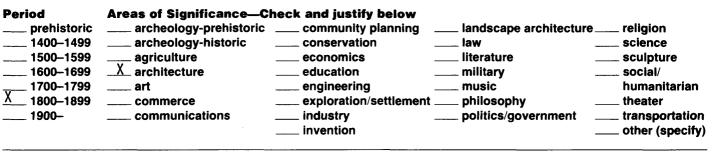
A gable-roofed, enclosed entrance to the cellar is located in front of the central bay on the first floor of the north elevation. The wide frieze and brackets which surround the entire house are visible on the north side, as well. The north side of the east addition has a concrete foundation and concrete steps leading to a door. The one story, frame structure appears to have had a later porch which is now removed.

The east elevation of the house has fewer doors and windows penetrating its surfaces than the other elevations of the house. A single, glazed door surmounted by a one-light transom on the projecting wall is adorned by the characteristic hood molding. Above this doorway is a window with wooden sill and hood molding. A pair of windows on the ground floor of the wing, just east of the door, is located immediately south of the one story addition.

The gable-roofed addition to the east facade is penetrated by two doors on the south side and one door on the east side.

The roof of the house is made of asphalt shingles. In addition to the brick chimney at the rear of the house, there is a central chimney which extends through the center of the main section. This chimney pre-dates the one at the rear of the house.

8. Significance



Specific dates ca. 1870

Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Weller House is significant because of its outstanding architectural detail, and remains as the best frame, rural house in northern Porter County of the Italianate mode.

Built in approximately 1870, the Weller House contains such outstanding architectural details as round-cornered window frames, sashes, and hood moldings which are made to simulate arches. The rope molding on the exterior corners of the house are of particular interest due to their infrequent occurrence in northwestern Indiana architecture. The use of double brackets under the eaves is unusual for this area, as well.

Since the recent destruction of two Italianate style houses in the vicinity, the Weller House is the only extant example of the Italianate style in the rural areas of northern Porter County. As a result, this house has become a unique architectural landmark.

In 1865 the land was purchased by Rosina Weller, and it was inherited by John C. and Charles E. Weller in 1880. The property was sold again to various purchasers in 1881, 1884, and 1901.

The 4.1 acre plot on which the Weller House is situated was purchased by the State Department of Corrections in [1931, and for 48 years was utilized by inmates to learn agricultural skills. This property was known as the Old Prison Farm. The farm contains agricultural outbuildings such as a barn, milk house and chicken coop, and a dormitory for the prisoners, as well.

However, these buildings have been omitted from the nomination due to their loss of integrity or relative newness.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Deed Records, Porter County Courthouse, Valparaiso, Indiana

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Continuation sheetweller House

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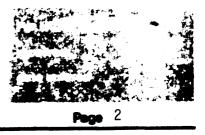
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The interior of the house contains five principal rooms on the first floor and five on the second floor, with high ceilings throughout. There are deep, rounded moldings around the doors and windows. Each window has ornate, iron window locks. Over each door is a movable transom to improve air circulation between rooms. The main entrance hall has a beautiful open staircase with a 90° turn. A curved wall follows the line of the balustrade to the second floor.

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Continuation sheet The Weller House

item number 10

West parallel to the West line 200'; thence North 88°, 46 minutes, 13 seconds West along the South line of Section 36, 140' to the point of beginning.