

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

FEB 2

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 Robinson, William A., House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 11 Forest Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Auburn N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Androscoggin code 001 zip code 04210

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.)

[Signature] 2/17/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

[Signature] 4/3/93
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

101

Robinson, William A., House

Androscoggin, Maine

Name of Property

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	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	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

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)

Gothic/Victorian Gothic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite

walls Other/Board-and-Batten

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROBINSON HOUSE *AN DRAGON CO ME*

Section number 7 Page 2

The William A. Robinson House stands along a short residential street on a hill overlooking Auburn's commercial district. It is a two-story wood frame building with a gable roof and board and batten siding. The house is asymmetrical with projecting gable ends, an L-shaped porch and an engaged tower with a pyramidal roof. The windows are one-over-one and two-over-two double-hung sash mounted in frames which project boldly from the plane of the wall and are sheltered by curved hoods embellished with diamond-shaped shingles.

The ornamental window hoods are only one of several decorative features on the exterior. Several second floor windows project far enough to be classified as oriels and are supported by brackets carved to suggest gargoyles. Each gable roof has vergeboard cut in trefoil patterns. The tower roof is also supported by gargoyle brackets, and as a lozenge fret frieze. The porch posts are square with Gothic style floral capitals and brackets. finally, the brick chimneys are corbelled and angled to suggest clustered shafts.

The interior of the house is largely intact with heavy moldings around the doors and windows, paneled doors, and a staircase with a massive newell post. There are also wood mantelpieces with round-arched openings and wood floors. All of the interior woodwork, however, was fashioned of inexpensive materials to be painted to compliment the wallpapers and painted ceilings known to have originally existed.

The kitchen and woodshed in the service wing has been extensively remodeled, although evidence of interior privies survives. The mantelpiece in one room off this has been lost, as has the second floor handrail for the back staircase. The latter is now accessed via a recently installed half-bath on the ground floor.

Also on the property is a carriage barn. it is a rectangular structure, one story high with a gable roof. It also features board-and-batten siding and Gothic vergeboard.

63

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.

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

1874

Significant Dates

1874

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kenway Brothers, Architects

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

_____ 104

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROBINSON HOUSE *ANDROS COBBIN COMB*

Section number 8 Page 2

The William A. Robinson House is one of the most outstanding examples of late nineteenth century Gothic style domestic architecture in western Maine. It is also significant as the only important surviving example in Maine of the work of the Auburn architects Herbert and Balstron Kenway. The property is eligible for nomination under criterion C.

Auburn in the early 1870s had been undergoing major development with the construction of large shoe and textile factories there and across the river in Lewiston. The architecture that was being built was generally rather conservative in its interpretation of the Italianate and Mansard styles. Into these conditions entered the Kenway Brothers in 1873, two English-born architects who introduced new architectural styles to the area. Their first known design was a store for Robinson & Beede, druggists, in late 1873. Shortly after one of these men, William A. Robinson, hired the architects to design a house on Auburn Heights which was unlike anything else being built in either Lewiston or Auburn.

Herbert P. Kenway (1851-1890) and Balstron C. Kenway (?-?) were from Glanmorgan in Wales. They arrived in Portland and evidently immediately settled in Auburn. The two brothers opened an office in the city building, offering services in both architecture and civil engineering. For a brief three year period they secured a number of important commissions in Auburn and elsewhere in the State. By 1875 Herbert had relocated to Boston where he worked in the City architect's office, although he maintained his association with the Auburn firm. The partnership was evidently dissolved in 1876 when it was reported that Balstron left for St. Paul, Minnesota. No other information has been discovered concerning his subsequent commissions. Herbert remained in Boston, establishing an architectural practice with Francis Allen about 1880.

William A. Robinson (1845-1926) came to Maine as a young man and learned the druggist trade. In 1867 he formed a partnership with Dr. J. W. Beede, a business which later became W. A. Robinson and Company. After Robinson built his house in 1874 he no doubt kept in contact with the Kenways when they were hired to remodel the Congregational Church he attended, and to design the city water supply of which he was a strong advocate.

Newspaper comments of the period indicate that the domestic work of the Kenway Brothers was considered quite novel for Auburn, and the Robinson House fits into that category. The board-and-batten siding and extreme vertical proportions was in itself unusual, but the exterior detailing was extraordinary. This included trefoil vergeboard, brackets in the form of gargoyles, and brick chimneys constructed to suggest Gothic style clustered shafts. The floral motif used for the porch capitals derived from the perpendicular style, the most popular period of Gothic architecture in

105

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROBINSON HOUSE

ANDROS COGGIN CUMÉ

Section number 8 Page 3

England. The English architects succeeded in translating the style popular for masonry buildings in their native country into the locally common building material of wood.

The interior is in some respects no less unusual. The central hall plan was locally still common for most residences in 1874 but the Robinson House plan is asymmetrical with a side hall parallel to the street and rooms of irregular size. There is a massive newell post for the staircase, but the moldings throughout the house, although with bold profiles, are relatively simple. This is probably because the walls and ceilings were papered and ceilings orientally painted in richly ornate colors. Evidence was uncovered in recent renovation work in the house and is supported by what is known about the architects other work.

Robinson did not reside here for long, subsequently selling the house to John Pickard in 1876 for \$4,750. Pickard worked for one of the important local shoe companies. In recent years the house fell into a derelict condition and has only recently been restored and renovated by the present owners.

106

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WILLIAM A ROBINSON HOUSE *ANDROSCOGGIN Co, ME*

Section number 9 Page 2

The Real Estate Register (Portland), July, 1874.

Lewiston Journal, 1873-1876.

Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds.

Herbert C. Kenway obituary notice, Newton Journal, July 18, 1890, page 4.

157

Robinson, William A., House
Name of Property

Androscoggin, Maine
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less Than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 9	4 0 1 0 2 0	4 8 8 3 1 7 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger G. Reed, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date January, 1993

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/287-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

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 _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.

148

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WILLIAM A ROBINSON HOUSE *ANDRUS COBBIN CA. 1870*

Section number 10 Page 2

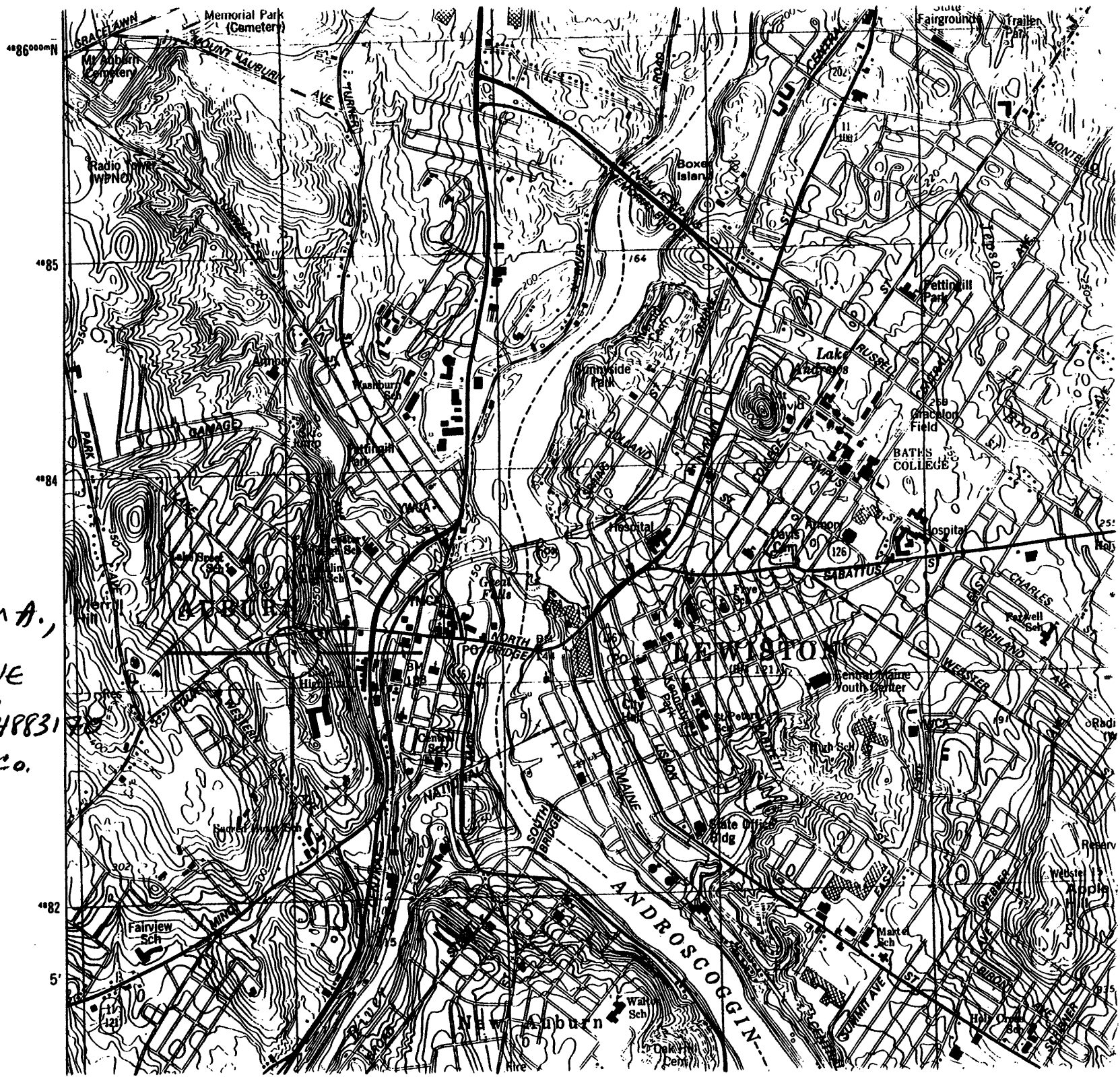
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies the City of Auburn Tax Map 11, Block 2, Lot 25.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary embraces the entire city lot historically associated with the Robinson House.

109



ROBINSON, WILLIAM A.,
House
AUBURN, MAINE
UTM: 19/401020/48831
ANDROSCOGGIN CO.

110 111