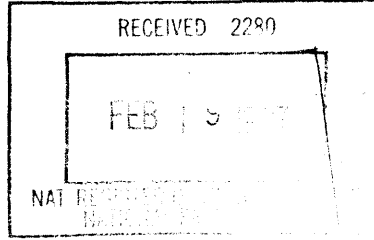


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 *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 Ringling, Charles, House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 201 Eighth Street N/A not for publication

city or town Baraboo N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Sauk code 111 zip code 53913

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 of Certifying Official/Title

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 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 of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson W. Beall

3/21/97

Ringling, Charles, House
Name of Property

Sauk, Wisconsin
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	
4		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
4	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/Single Dwelling
Domestic/Secondary Structure

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling
Domestic/Secondary Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls wood

roof asbestos shingle

other wood

Narrative Description

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

Ringling, Charles, House
Name of Property

Sauk, Wisconsin
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.

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.

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

Period of Significance

1900-1912

Significant Dates

1900 (i)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Ringling, Charles E.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Isenberg Brothers (ii)

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Circus World Museum, Baraboo

Ringling, Charles, House
Name of Property

Sauk, Wisconsin
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	27 8 36 0	48 16 9 90
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	2 78 4 40	48 16 9 80

3	16	2 78 42 0	4 8 17 0 70
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	16	2 78 34 8	4 8 17 0 75

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 Daina Penkiunas / Sally Clayton-Jones
organization _____ date March 30, 1996
street & number 214 Acewood Blvd. telephone 608-243-8144
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53714

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 Sally Clayton-Jones
street & number 201 8th Street (PO Box 73) telephone 608-356-4229
city or town Baraboo state WI zip code 53913

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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Charles Ringling House, Baraboo, Sauk County, Wisconsin

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The Charles Ringling property is a roughly two acre site located several blocks from the business district of Baraboo, Wisconsin. The parcel contains four wood frame buildings: the Charles Ringling House, a carriage house, the Conway Cottage, and a small barn. The lot is planted with mature oaks and maples, mainly on the east and north side, and newer trees, replacing the original elms, on the street aspects. The property is bounded by Eighth, Ninth and Ash streets with an alley passing behind the house in an east-west direction. The house stands by itself on the southern half of the property, all other buildings are contained on the northern half. The Carriage House is situated behind the main house, the little barn on the north-east side of the alley, and the Cottage north of the barn, facing Ninth Street on the north-east corner of the lot.

THE CHARLES E. RINGLING HOUSE

EXTERIOR

The Charles Ringling House is a large, wood frame, Georgian Revival residence built by the Isenberg Brothers of Baraboo in 1900. The house is two stories high with a full attic located under its hipped roof. Gables emphasize the central bays on the front and side elevations. The house rests on a rusticated granite ashlar foundation which rises in even courses to approximately three feet above ground level. A photograph dated 1908 shows the house originally to have been painted white; c. 1936-1937 it was painted its current canary yellow with white detailing.(1)

The principal facade of the house faces onto Eighth Street and is approached by a sidewalk. From here, wide steps lead up to a large landing floored in red tile and with rusticated granite surrounds. From the terrace four more steps lead to the one story front porch. Fluted, wood Ionic columns support an entablature with dentils and the porch's flat roof. A turned wood balustrade runs between the columns, and is repeated on the roof of the porch.

The porch extends across three bays of the ground floor facade, and defines the main block of the house. The ground floor facade, lying some nine feet behind the columns, is

(1) Circus World Museum photo collection.

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Charles Ringling House, Baraboo, Sauk County, Wisconsin

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divided into bays by applied Ionic pilasters. The two outer pilasters terminate the porch. The two central pilasters rise behind the porch to the full two stories of the house. Together with pilaster corner boards, the tall pilasters provide visual support for a second dentilled entablature capped by a heavily molded cornice. The two tall pilasters also provide the base for a central pediment. In its center is a lunette framed with heavy molding.

At the center of the porch is a double front door of oak with an egg and dart molding surrounding single, glazed panels. The door is flanked by 10 light side panels. The flanking bays each contain a large single sash window with an overhead fixed, two light panel. The second story fenestration is of double hung windows, in the center of each of the flanking bays, and paired windows in the central bay.

Although the design of the house was inspired by the central hall plan, variations are apparent in protrusions from the central three bay block. On the front elevation, the first floor extends the width of an additional bay to the right. It contains an additional single sash with overhead panel window. It repeats the cornice molding of the porch and has a balustrade running along its top.

There is no overriding symmetry to the remaining elevations. The majority of windows are one over one, double hung. Variations occur with room functions, as will be noted in the discussion of the plan. Unity is maintained through a balance of window placement and the uniformity of materials.

On the east side, the central bay, marked off by plain strips, is capped by a gable with a large double window surmounted by a lunette similar to that of the center front. The window placement of the facade is irregular. In the left hand bay, a broad, high set tripartite leaded glass window is centrally placed under the flat roof of the second story porch. Other windows are placed to conform with domestic requirements; they are asymmetrically placed in the central bay and there is no third window on the second story to match that of the pantry below.

It is to the rear that the asymmetry of the plan becomes most obvious. The house assumes a U shape, with the west leg protruding further. The bays vary in width and fenestration depending on interior function. The west leg contains three

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Charles Ringling House, Baraboo, Sauk County, Wisconsin

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square, leaded windows set below a shallow cornice molding. The second story contains a single double hung sash window. The far left bay of the east leg is lit by two sash windows below and a single window above. The rear bay contains a large, Palladian motif window, framed in heavy molding. The roof line is also irregular; a large double dormer breaks the roof line at the rear bay. The elevator tower rises above the service bay and, although it was added later, the tower maintains the same materials, cornice molding, and corner pilaster strips found elsewhere on the exterior. However, in contrast to the predominantly rectilinear windows elsewhere, those of the tower have arched tops giving the structure the impression of the belvederes of the Italian Villa style.

Located within the U is a large porte cochere. A balustraded flat deck is supported by paired Ionic columns standing on a low granite wall. The columns are round and fluted, except at the corners where they become square piers with Ionic capitals. The porch portion of the porte cochere provides two means of access. From the drive there is a high step to disembark from a carriage. Pedestrian access is provided at the side by a short flight of stairs. The door from the porch leads to the back hall. This door is glazed, set in panelled oak. A second, service door is located at ground level at the base of the service bay.

On the west side of the house we return to a more regular plan. As on the east side, there is a slightly protruding central bay with a gable lit by a double window surmounted by a lunette. The ground floor windows are large, corresponding to the entertainment functions of this side of the house. On the left is a bay window. At the center is a set of three windows and to the right single windows flank a central chimney. The four windows on the second floor vary in size and do not correspond to the fenestration below.

INTERIOR

CENTRAL HALL

The principal entrance to the house is through the double doors of the front porch. This pair of doors opens into a vestibule measuring approximately eleven feet by five feet. The floor is of 3/4 inch glazed white tiles with a Greek key design in red forming a border. The interior door arrangement mirrors the outer doors, a second pair of glazed doors flanked by side lights opens into the main hall.

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The central hall (measuring 11'1" x 27'8") provides access to the principal rooms of the house. At the head of the hall is the main staircase to the second floor. The landing contains a large triple window in a leaded floral design. The ceiling of the hall contains nine transverse false beams in oak above a dentilled frieze. At the staircase end, a larger transverse beam supporting the landing rests on elaborately carved oak brackets. The free side of the staircase, the small panel between the two flights, and the underside of the upper flight are panelled in the same oak with simple moldings. The turned balusters and the molded hand rail terminate in a square fluted newel at the base. A chair rail runs around the hall and continues up the stairs. The wall beneath it is of the original painted canvas.

Below the upper flight of stairs is a panelled oak door with inset glazing. It provides access by one step to a lower rear hall, which contains to the right a cloakroom and a toilet, and to the left a step up to the library. At the back of the hall is a panelled oak door leading to the porte cochere.

PARLOR

At the left front of the house is the parlor (22'5" x 14'4"). The eight foot entrance from the main hall may be closed with a pair of panelled sliding doors. Along the opposite wall, but not aligned with the hall opening, is a shallow bay containing an inglenook. The central fireplace has a surround of red marble with carved oak molding. On either side of the fireplace are inset window seats with panelled backs rising to the height of the mantle. Over each seat is a half size window. In the main part of the room, two larger windows, each with a rectangular fixed pane above, face onto the west and south sides of the house. The parlor ceiling is decorated with an oval plaster frieze in the Adam style. The room's woodwork has been lightened from its original golden varnish, but all of the fittings, including those to the sliding doors, are original. The chandelier is a replacement, as are those in the main hall and the music room.

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MUSIC ROOM

The music room (13'1" x 17'10") is entered from the parlor or the main hall by sliding doors. Those from the living room create an eight foot opening, allowing the two rooms to be joined for entertaining. Opposite these doors, and slightly left of center, is a fireplace and hearth in green tile with an oak surround, rising to a wide mantelpiece. The surround was somewhat altered during interior renovations in the 1950s; it was flattened by removing two columns to the front. To the west is a shallow bay containing a large window divided by molding into a larger center section flanked by two smaller windows, all surmounted by rectangular glazed panels. The suspended canvas ceiling bears a rectangular, plaster frieze in the Adam Style. Although now painted a light olive green, the canvas covered walls were originally Pompeian red; a bit of the original color is visible beneath rub marks from furniture.

LIBRARY

The library (18'2" x 17'10") is located at the back of the house and is reached by the service hall or the music room. The walls are panelled to a height of six feet in varnished Honduran mahogany. The panelling is divided into approximately eighteen inch sections by simple moldings and is topped by a carved Greek key frieze supporting a narrow shelf. Family legend says that the wood was a present to Charles Ringling from a business contact during the period from 1898 to 1915 when the Ringlings were involved in a great deal of business concerning railway and real estate development, especially in Florida and the Wyoming-Montana area.

The north side of the room, opposite the arched entry to the music room, is lined with bookcases with leaded glass doors. The bookcases rise to the same height as the panelling along the other walls. Above the bookcases is a wide tripartite leaded glass window with the same stylized floral motif. The glass is thought to be by the Chicago Glass Company as it resembles some of their designs. On the west side of the room is a bay window, 4'9" in depth, the opening from the room framed in mahogany. At the center of the south wall is a fireplace of green Wisconsin marble. The mahogany surround lacks a mantelpiece, instead, above the fireplace is an oval panel framed by two pilasters. The pilasters rise from the floor and support a heavily molded pediment with a carved fleur-de-lis at its center. The entire composition rises to

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nearly ceiling height. The ceiling is decorated with false beams with carved supports, also in mahogany. The polished bronze chandelier hanging in the room is original, converted from gas jets to electricity.

DINING ROOM

Located at the right front of the house is the dining room. This large room, approximately 21' x 18', is panelled in dark, quarter sawn oak to a height of six feet. The sliding doors from the central hall are in matching panelled dark oak. The room's panelling has vertical channels about every seven inches, and each of these channels terminates in a carved bracket supporting a plate shelf. The room contains two shallow bays with built in cupboards. Along the north wall, four cabinets with leaded glass doors are located above the plate shelf. Along the east wall, two shallow dish cupboards are set to either side of a pierced central panel which covers the large original radiator; these too have leaded glass doors. Above the plate shelf are three leaded windows matching the design of the cupboards, as does the upper glass panel of the door leading to the pantry. In addition, the room contains two windows with fixed glazed panels above facing the front porch.

SERVICE AREA

Immediately behind the dining room is the butler's pantry (measuring approximately 13' x 5'7"). It is furnished with cupboards and a countertop. The cupboards below the counter are closed and painted, while those above have glazed doors. At the eastern end there is a slender window, and a metal bar sink with a marble counter is laid into the adjoining countertop. At the west end is a large walk-in cupboard. It was originally zinc lined and used as an icebox; the metal has been removed and now it serves as a broom closet.

A painted panelled swing door with a single glazed pane leads from the pantry to the kitchen (14' x 12'). A large arched opening leads to an attached breakfast room (14' x 10') on the north side of the house. Although the woodwork and structure of the kitchen are original, the room has been altered over time. A second walk-in cupboard is located on the west wall and next to it is the door leading to the service hall and elevator.

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The service hall may be reached from either the kitchen, a door by the main stairs in the main hall, or from the back service door. In addition to the elevator, the service hall contains a second set of stairs. They are in dark oak with a molded newel and give access to the service hall above. The hall itself is panelled in oak to a height of seven feet; the doors are also of oak. Above the panelling by the kitchen door is a fire hose fitting and control wheel (the canvas hose has been removed).

The house has undergone few structural changes since its construction. The exception was the installation of an Otis elevator 1917-1918. It was put in because of the illness of the second owner, Henry Ringling Sr. (Charles' younger brother). The lift's installation involved halving the original size of the main and second story service halls and the construction of a tower to house the I-beams and upper machinery to support the elevator's weight.

The elevator runs in an encased shaft. The machinery is in an enclosed space below in the basement. The original Otis control panel is still in use. The cage, with a carrying weight of 500 pounds, is of black painted steel. The occupants are protected by a sliding grille door, also in steel, which must be shut to provide contact before the elevator can be started by push buttons on the outside or inside on a wooden panel. Although it occasionally shows signs of aging, the elevator normally runs well.

SECOND STORY

Access to the second floor is by either of the two staircases or the elevator. Circulation is through a long hallway parallel to the main facade and a second hallway leading to to a bedroom over the library. There are three bedrooms across the front of the house, each occupying a bay of the facade. Over the music room is a chamber built as Mrs. Ringling's study. It has a fireplace in terra cotta and is the only upstairs room with a fireplace. A fourth bedroom is placed over the library. A fifth bedroom with a private bath is located over the kitchen. There are two additional bathrooms on this floor, one between the sitting room and the northwest bedroom and one at the east end of the long hall. All of the bathrooms retain some of their original features

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such as tiled walls, marble sinks, and walk-in cupboards. In addition, there is a marble sink in the passageway linking the southwest bedroom and the sitting room.

ATTIC

The stairs of the service hall continue up to the attic, as does the elevator. The central space is a large billiard room, running full length from north to south. The original billiard table is located under false beams for scoring racks and overhead lights. The east and west gables contain partially finished rooms. The room to the east contains a sink, suggesting this may have been intended as a servant's room. Additional storage spaces under the eaves are not finished.

BASEMENT

The house sits on a full basement reached by the service stairs. The stairs lead to the laundry room, which still contains its original granite tubs. Part of the space is occupied by the cabinet housing the elevator machinery. The walls here are finished in textured plaster. In the remainder of the basement the walls are unfinished, showing heavy masonry walls to the exterior and brick walls and brick piers supporting an I beam for the interior walls. The remainder of the basement is reached through a small hall leading off the laundry room, which also contains the basement access to the elevator. Toward the front of the house the hall opens onto a fruit cellar with its original wooden storage cabinets and suspended meat safe. Beyond the hall is a large workshop containing the furnace. To the south of this is a small room for wood and coal, to the north another room, and, turning back toward the east, a walk-in vault under the back porch. The floor is poured concrete throughout.

CARRIAGE HOUSE - CONTRIBUTING

The two story carriage house is located across the alley from the porte cochere of the main house. Its construction and detailing mimic that of the residence. Because of these similarities it appears to have been built at the same time as the house (1900). Pilaster strips at the corners rise two stories to a dentilled frieze and molded cornice capped by a hipped roof. The left portion of the carriage house is divided into two roughly equal sized bays. On the lower floor, the

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east bay has a large sliding door leading to the spaces for the carriages. The door is divided into six panels, with blank panels below and nine light windows in the upper half. The west bay of the lower floor contains a pair of one over one double hung windows. On the second story, a single window is located over the lower pair and a pair of windows is over the sliding door. To the east of the sliding door a door with a sidelight provides secondary access to the building. Next to the door and projecting south toward the alley is a greenhouse (14' x 18'). The base of the greenhouse is of regularly laid ashlar, above are multi paned glass panels separated by heavy moldings. The greenhouse has a gable roof with the front gable end also filled with glass panes. The second story of the right side of the carriage house is recessed behind the greenhouse. It contains two single pane windows above the door.

The east side of the building, projecting slightly from the plane of the greenhouse, has a single window lighting the box stall and a half-glazed Dutch door opening to the stall area. On the second story is a glazed double door which originally served the hay mow, with the beam for the hay hook projecting above it, and two additional windows. To the north are three half height windows to light the stalls, a single window for the tack room, and a double window lighting the carriage area. The second story has four irregularly spaced windows with a central dormer set into the roof. On the west, three evenly spaced double hung windows light the carriage area, with second story windows set directly above them in the servant's quarters.

The large, south facing sliding door leads into a single room (20' x 29') which originally housed carriages and later cars. It has a laid wooden floor and tongue and groove, varnished oak panelled walls. The panelling runs vertically to a height of three feet and then horizontally. Above, the ceiling is similarly panelled with a beam bolted onto it starting about six feet from either end of the room. The door to the right leads to the entryway and from there to the greenhouse. Further along the east wall a four foot sliding door opens to the stall area. Beyond is the door to the tack room. Between the first two doors is a wood key cabinet with the monogram CER. Between the doors to the stalls and to the tack room is one of the remaining original intercom phones (the

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mouthpiece is a replacement). One other intercom phone remains in the attic of the house, the rest are stored because they no longer work.

The remaining ground floor rooms retain most of their original panelling and fittings. The tack room is furnished with panelled varnished oak cabinets and stands. A door in the central entry way gives access to a toilet room and to the staircase to the upper floor. In the stalls, a panelled door on the north side conceals a shallow cupboard. There are three horse stalls (each 5' x 9') with hanging mangers and iron mesh upper divider screens. Across the wide aisle to the south is the access to the full basement below, another cupboard, and a sliding door to the box stall (11'x9').

Upstairs are two apartments; the one above the carriage room is the old servants' quarters, the other is a hay mow converted in the late 1930s by Mrs. Harry Ringling. The original servants' quarters remains largely unchanged since construction. As one enters the apartment, to the left is a large kitchen. At the end of the hall is a combined living and dining area. Along the right side of the apartment are a bathroom and two bedrooms, one entered from the hallway, the second from the living room.

CONWAY COTTAGE - CONTRIBUTING

The "Cottage," sited on the northeast corner of the property, is a one story, wood frame bungalow built for Edith Ringling's widowed mother, Mrs. Conway. The house faces north onto Ninth Street and is contemporary with the other buildings on the property. It is rectangular in plan (about 30' x 20') with a room sized bay projecting to the west and with a small shed to the south of the rear door. The building has a hipped roof and sits atop a raised ashlar foundation.

Five steps lead from a short walk to the front porch. Low walls enclose the sides of the porch and a pent roof supported by large, wood brackets shelters the door. On either side of the front door are two small windows in the upper half of the wall. The two bays to either side of the porch each contain a single one over one double hung window. The windows have small molded cornices and the same treatment is used around the house.

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The interior consists of six small rooms. At the front of the house is a shallow, lateral hall. To the west are the living room and dining room. The extension is currently used as a bedroom, but was probably intended to be used as a music room or study. It is the only room containing an upper bank of three windows, these along the western wall. Opening from the dining room, and directly behind the front hall is the kitchen. The east end of the house contains two bedrooms, one opening to the kitchen and one to the front hall. A pass through bathroom is located between them. All interior doors are five panel and all doors, cupboards and surrounds are of varnished oak.

LOWER, OR SMALL, BARN - CONTRIBUTING

Located behind the cottage with direct access to the alley is the lower barn. While it differs in its construction and level of finish from the other buildings on the property, it is assumed to be contemporary and is a contributing resource in that it is part of the building ensemble which comprised the Ringling homestead in Baraboo.

The barn is of two parts. The larger portion is the barn proper to the east. It is of wood board and batten construction with exposed rafters supporting the gable roof. The south face contains two large doors with simple wood surrounds. The door to the left is an older panelled garage door, the one to the right is its modern equivalent. Above the modern garage door is a door to the upper hayloft. The barn also contains a pigeon loft. Two pigeon holes and a small four light window are found on the west facing gable.

The lower extension to the left, or west, served as a chicken house. Charles' wife Edith mentions her hens, assumed to be in a hen house in this portion of the small barn, in an undated letter.(2) The extension differs in construction from the main barn and may have been added later. The exterior walls are covered with clapboards and simple corner boards. The chicken house also has a gable roof and sits on a rubble foundation. The wall facing the alley contains three windows, a pair of double hung two over two windows to the left and a single one over one window to the right. A panelled door on the west wall leads to the interior. To its right is a double

(2) Edith Ringling to Mrs. Cole. Sauk County Historical Society collections.

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hung two over two window. To its left is a lean-to running across the back of the structure. It appears to have been added later as the clapboards break at the eave line.

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- (i) Sauk County Democrat, 12 April 1900.
- (ii) Sauk County Democrat, 12 April 1900 and 13 December 1900.

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The Charles Ringling Property is significant as an example of turn of the century Georgian Revival style home with an intact complex of outbuildings, and for its association with Charles Ringling, its original owner.

Historic Context --Early History of Baraboo

The City of Baraboo is located in eastern Sauk County, Wisconsin. Baraboo's origins date to 1839 when Eban Peck, Wallace Rowan, Abram Wood and James Van Syke settled on the banks of the Baraboo River. Wood and Van Syke claimed land on the upper bend of the river and erected a sawmill there. In 1844 G. Brown erected a second sawmill in the area of the oxbows of the river. By 1845 there was a gristmill on the opposite bank, followed by the Hays Pratt and Hayes shingle mill. Development was rapid; by 1850 there were four dams with a fifth added in the 1890s. More milling industries followed, including a chair factory. The local supply of wood and the water power from the river was the foundation of the local economy during this early period. Fabric manufacture followed; by 1874 the Leland Woolen Mill produced 7000 yards monthly. At the same time, J.J. Brown's Baraboo Manufacturing Company was turning out 1,000,000 square feet of finished hardwood.

Commercial and political growth followed the mills. In the 1840s Auguston Haraszthy started the first store. In 1849 James Maxwell built a frame house on the south side of what is now the Courthouse Square; this was the first frame house north of the river. At the same time, Col. Edward Sumner built the Western Hotel, and Lyman Clark the "Baraboo House." In 1846, following a dispute with Prairie du Sac, Baraboo became the county seat; however, this was only finally confirmed in 1853 following a contest with Reedsburg.

In 1856 the population was about 2000. There were four dams, a flour mill, four sawmills, a gristmill, a picket and shingle factory, two cabinet factories with planing mills, five cabinet and wagon makers, two financial institutions, six lawyers, six physicians, and a drug store. In 1857 a tannery and shoe factory were added and the Sauk County Bank came into existence (now the Baraboo National Bank).

Baraboo was officially incorporated as a village in 1865. Milling activity tapered off and the village became a trading center for the surrounding agricultural area. With the arrival of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad in 1871, Baraboo

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became the distribution point for the Madison division, bringing in an estimated \$200,000 a year.(3) This new prosperity brought a construction boom in the 1870s. By 1876, the Wisconsin Business Directory lists almost 90 commercial establishments. In 1880 the population reached 3266, growing to 4605 by 1890.(4)

Historical Context-- Ringling Circus and Baraboo

In 1882 Al and John Ringling, who had been gaining experience with travelling shows, returned to the Ringling family home in Baraboo. Soon after, five of the brothers (Al, Otto, Alf T., Charles and John) formed the Ringling Brothers Classic and Comic Concert Company. Charles played the violin, Alf T. the organ and cornet, Al did juggling, John did the clog dance and sang funny "Dutch" songs, and Otto did the publicity and advance work. The Classic and Comic Concert Co. played the 1882 winter season in south Wisconsin and Iowa, reaching into South Dakota and Minnesota. This season was repeated the following year, with the five boys working trade jobs the rest of the year.

What was to become "The World's Greatest Show," the Ringling Brothers Circus, opened in Baraboo on Monday May 19, 1884 with Yankee Robinson. This was a small wagon show with no band wagon, no menagerie and no wild animals.(5) They toured for the rest of the season, showing a small profit. Yankee Robinson died in the fall of 1884 leaving the brothers to fill in the winter months with their Carnival of Fun. They opened again in Baraboo on May 18, 1885. By this time they had fifteen wagons and a round tent 80 feet in diameter, as well as a rather dilapidated "Hideous Hyena - Striata Gigantum." (A real hyena, but blind.)

(3) C.W. Butterfield, The History of Sauk County, Wisconsin (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880.

(4) Michael J. Goc, Many a Fine Harvest: Sauk County 1840-1990 (NP: New Past Press, 1990) 155.

(5) John M. Kelley, "Before the Board of Appeals and Review, Inheritance Tax Division, Treasury Department. In RE Estates- Henry Ringling, Alf. T. Ringling," 1923, 19. Also, 1882-1914 Composite Route Book. In the collection of the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin.

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Growth from these beginnings was steady, despite a bad season in 1888, so that by 1890 a newspaper reported:

The Ringling Brothers contribute no small account of business to the city this winter. They have 26 people on the payroll, besides the cost of keeping a large number of horses, animals, etc., to say nothing of the five Ringling brothers personal expenses, which help to reduce their bank account for the benefit of the community.(6)

The Baraboo Intensive Survey of 1989 noted the substantial impact the presence of the circus had a on the local economy:

Because of the large amount of performers and workers required to produce the circus, the Ringling presence was and remains pervasive in Baraboo. Wagon shops, animal barns, sewing rooms, wagon barns, rooming houses and offices all remain as evidence of the large effect circus-related enterprises had on the community. The circus dominated the railroad and the mills in Baraboo's economy of the early 1900's, as the Ringlings not only employed hundreds of local citizens themselves, but gave business to carpenters, painters, blacksmiths, seamstresses and merchants.(7)

During this period the brothers also took on their definitive roles in running the show. Otto (known as "the King") was responsible for all financial and banking operations. John took care of all routing and transport including the scheduling of trains and liaison with the railroads. The press and public relations were up to Alf T., while Al was the equestrian director, which in circus terms means that he produced the show. Charles, called Mr. Charles on the lot, was unofficially in charge of dealing with opposition and served as the circus' general manager until his death. Henry, who joined the show in 1886 when he turned 16, was in charge of the front door. Gus, who had been working in the Twin Cities, rejoined his brothers and took over

(6) Baraboo Republic, 29 January 1890.

(7) Marla Miller, Baraboo Intensive Survey (Baraboo: Community Development Authority, City of Baraboo, 1989), 16.

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responsibility of the advertising department.(8) The five original brothers were full and equal partners in the business; however, there was no defined agreement and no written document detailing responsibilities or interest in the circus.(9) This arrangement lasted until the death of the brothers.

In 1890 the circus achieved the status of a railroad show with 18 railway cars and a menagerie of animals, including leopards, kangaroos, a zebra, and a hippopotamus.(10) In 1892 they traveled in 32 cars, more than doubling in size and in the area in which they played. In 1900 the show travelled from the Atlantic to the Pacific and made its first trip to California. By 1903 the brothers had bought themselves a private railway car, serving as their home away from home, often with Charles' wife Edith and Al's wife Lou accompanying the circus. By 1905 the circus accompaniment numbered 44 cars.

In 1898 the brothers were in keen contention with Barnum and Bailey for the title of the biggest and best show in America. At this point, Mr. Bailey took his show to Europe for five years leaving the Ringlings largely unchallenged, although the brothers still had to contend with Forepaugh-Sells on the East Coast. When the brothers acquired controlling interest in Forepaugh-Sells in 1905 and 1906 this threat was neutralized. In 1907 their position as "Circus Kings" was assured; they purchased Barnum and Bailey from James Bailey's widow for \$450,000 and paid an additional \$100,000 for the name "The Greatest Show on Earth." After the purchase of their competitor, John and Otto busied themselves with the Barnum and Bailey circus. Charles and Alf T. ran the Ringling show, with Charles continuing as general manager of the Ringling Brothers Circus. As before, he travelled with the show in his private railroad car.(11)

(8) Of all the brothers, Gus was the only one not to become a full partner; he died before any of the five original partners. Henry inherited Otto's share in 1911.

(9) Kelley, "Before the Board of Appeals," 14. Gus never became a full partner because he died before any of the others. Henry was left Otto's share after Otto's death in 1911.

(10) Kelley, "Before the Board of Appeals," 21.

(11) "Charles Ringling, Badger Circus King, Is Dead," Milwaukee Sentinel, 4 December 1926. And, Gene Plowden, Those Amazing Ringlings and Their Circus (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1967),124.

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During this period of remarkable growth the personal fortunes of the family also were established. After a somewhat disastrous season in 1888, they did well in 1889. As noted above, the train show started in 1890 and by 1901 they were playing in an area extending from Boston to San Diego, from Montreal to Mississippi.

The brothers' circus building activity in Baraboo paralleled the the growth of the Ringling show. In 1888 the brothers built their first ring barn on Water Street. In 1889 they leased land from Mrs. Potter for a spur track to take railway cars, and also bought their first two elephants, Babylon and Fannie. In 1890 they put up additional buildings, presumably by the ring barn. By 1897 they were in a position to pay \$800 for the 2.4 acres along Water Street which they had been leasing since 1890 from the former Baraboo Butter Tub. In 1898 they bought the camel barn property for \$275, as well as the former Lavoc Hotel on the north side of Water Street and additional land along the river.

Charles Ringling and the Ringling Family

Charles Ringling was the fifth of seven brothers born to August and Marie Salome Ringling. About 1848 Charles' father, then with the last name of Rungeling and age 21, arrived in Milwaukee from Dankelhausen in in Hanover, Germany, where his father had him trained as a harness maker and carriage trimmer. Late in 1851 he met Marie Salome Juliar, who had emigrated with her family in 1845 from Ostheim, near Colmar, in Alsace. August and Marie were married in Milwaukee in early 1852.(12)

August and his bride moved to Chicago where they anglicized their name to Ringling and their first son Albrecht (Al) was born in 1852. They then returned to Milwaukee where

(12) Both of Marie Salome's sisters also married into families with strong circus connections. Marie Madeline married Gottlieb Gollmar of the Gollmar Brothers. Marie Catherine married the carriage and wagon builder Henry Moeller, and was the mother of the builders of many of the outstanding circus wagons of their time.

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August (Gus) was born in 1854. From Milwaukee the family came to Baraboo where father August opened his own shop in 1855. Otto was born in Baraboo in 1858. The same year August had to sell out his business and he transferred his family to McGregor, Iowa. There, the remaining sons were born: Alfred T. in 1862, Charles in 1864, John in 1866, and Henry in 1868. It was in McGregor that the six older brothers saw their first circus, the Stowe Circus. August moved his family again in 1872 to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. The family fell on hard times when August lost his job when Trainer's Carriage Works burned down. August and Marie's last child and only girl, Ida, was born there in 1874.

The final move back to Baraboo came in 1876. In 1878 August Sr. again lost his shop to a fire, but reopened at the corner of Third Avenue and Broadway. By this time the older boys were working away from home, easing the family's finances. As discussed above, the brothers began their joint circus career in 1882.

In 1888 Charles married Edith Conway, then 18, the daughter of a Methodist minister. They had two children: Hester born in 1893 and Robert born in 1897. Edith finished high school, but Charles' education stopped short of this, although he and his family were bilingual in English and German and read a great deal. He had some training in his father's profession as harness maker and once worked at it. His business skills and taste were self taught.

From the time of their marriage until 1912 Charles and Edith had their primary home in Baraboo. Although they both travelled extensively with the circus, from late 1900 the house on Eighth Street was the center of family activity and entertaining.

Charles and Edith followed brother John to Florida in 1912. There they built themselves a large house in Sarasota. Charles played an active role in his new home. At the time of his death, he was president of the Ringling Trust and Savings Co. of Sarasota and the president of the city's Chamber of Commerce. He died in Sarasota on December 3, 1926 after an illness.

Throughout their marriage, Edith played an important role in the circus. After Charles' death she inherited his share of the circus and continued much of his work. As in earlier

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times, she kept on travelling with the show. Edith died in 1953.

The Charles Ringling House

The Sauk County directory of 1898-1899 August and Salome (the parents) were listed as living at 210 2nd Street, Al and Lou and 330 6th Street, Alf T. and Della at 3rd Avenue and West Street, Charles and Edith at 722 East Street, and Gus and Annie at 230 2nd Street. As the circus prospered, the Ringling brothers bought or built themselves new homes in Baraboo. It seems that the first house to be built for the family was that of the parents, a relatively modest two-story structure at 821 Oak Street. Gus and Annie bought or built their house on the northeast corner of 8th Avenue and Birch Street in 1898. Ida Ringling North's family lived at 309 Birch; Henry and Ida in a house at 919 Oak that they had bought in 1902. Al built a Richardsonian Romanesque home completed in 1906 on Broadway (NR, now the Elks Club). Alf built a Georgian inspired house at the corner of 10th and Oak streets, completed in 1901 (13).

Charles began his Georgian Revival house and outbuildings in 1900. Charles Ringling purchased his new property in 1899 from William A. Warren, who developed this addition to the City of Baraboo.(14) According to the Sauk County Democrat of 12 April 1900, the "Isenberg Brothers have the contract to erect a new house for Chas. Ringling on the corner of Ash and Eight Streets. Work will begin as soon as the weather will permit." The work must have proceeded quite quickly, as by December the same paper wrote: "Chas. Ringling has accepted his new residence."(15) However, it is thought that the house was not completely finished in view of the elaborate decoration and panelling in some of the rooms. By 7 March 1901 the house was ready for guests; the paper had a social note referring to Mrs. Ringling entertaining guests at the residence.(16) Although

(13) Baraboo Republic, 15 November 1899. And, Baraboo News, 16 May 1901. The house is no longer extant.

(14) Sauk County Register of Deeds. However, the transfer was not recorded until 16 August 1901.

(15) Sauk County Democrat, 13 December 1900.

(16) Sauk County Democrat, 7 March 1901.

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the house where they previously lived on East Street was a comfortable family home, it lacked a large yard for stables and the rooms were not suitable for large scale entertaining. Various social notes in the Baraboo newspapers reported on Mrs. Ringling's teas for up to 76 guests in her new home. Likewise, in an era when few townspeople kept their own horses, the stables were a symbol of wealth and achievement.

It is unknown if the house had an architect as a designer or if the Isenbergs used available plan books. The Isenberg brothers were active builders throughout Sauk County, especially in their home town of Baraboo. In his 1918 history of the county, Harry Elsworth Cole credits the brothers with "many of the largest buildings erected in Baraboo, including all of the Ringlings." (17) In addition to the Ringling houses, the Isenbergs also built the circus' winter quarter buildings.

George Isenberg was born in 1867 in Berdorf, Waldeck, Germany. There, he attended public schools and apprenticed as a carpenter. In 1885 he immigrated to the United States, coming directly to Sauk County. In 1886 George joined his older brother Karl, who had preceded him to Baraboo. For several years George worked as a carpenter for Karl, eventually the two formed the Isenberg Brothers partnership. (18)

In an obituary from the Milwaukee Sentinel, architect Alfred Clas claims to have designed the home in Baraboo for Charles. (19) However, the home displays design flaws, such as the misalignment of fireplaces and door openings, that are uncharacteristic of other works by Ferry and Clas. In addition, the local Baraboo paper makes no mention of visits by the architect to the building site as they did in 1901 and 1902 when Alfred Clas came to inspect the site for the house of Baraboo banker Jacob Van Orden.

Since 1900 the brothers had been buying real estate in Florida. In 1912 Charles sent George Isenberg to Sarasota to supervise construction of a new house, apparently a frame house

(17) Harry Elsworth Cole, A Standard History of Sauk County Wisconsin (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), 626.

(18) Cole, 625-626.

(19) "Ringling 'Great Showman, True Friend,' Says Clas," Milwaukee Sentinel, 4 December 1926.

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near where the "Pink Palace" now stands.(20) Charles and his family began dividing their time between a summer house in Evanston, Illinois, and their winter house in Florida. In 1916 Charles sold the Baraboo house to his brother Henry.

The house and outbuildings have been owned continuously by the Ringling family. The house passed from Charles Ringling to his brother Henry Ringling Sr., then to Henry's widow Ida B. (Palmer) Ringling. From her the house passed to their son, Henry Ringling II. After his death in 1956 it passed to his son Henry III, who died in 1962, then to Henry II's widow Jean (Fowler) Ringling, and now to Henry II's daughter.

Conclusion

The years Charles Ringling occupied the house were a period of tremendous growth for the Ringling circus. In 1900 the circus travelled across the continent, playing in 28 states, with Charles as the general manager of the operation. During these years, the circus acquired Barnum and Bailey and the Forepaugh and Sells circuses to become the largest circus operation in the world. After the purchase of the Barnum and Bailey Circus in 1907, Charles continued to manage the original Ringling Brothers show. In 1918 the Ringlings moved the combined circus winter quarters from Baraboo to Bridgeport, Connecticut, the former winter quarters of Barnum and Bailey; therefore, the circus was quartered in Baraboo almost the entire time Charles and Edith Ringling owned the house, using it for entertaining and serving as a home base for the family.

The property is further significant as an intact homestead including all the contemporary outbuildings. The house, stables, barn, and mother-in-law cottage provide a physical account of the buildings needed to accommodate a prosperous and famous business man and his family at the turn of the century.

The Charles Ringling house is a unique example in Baraboo of the large scale Georgian Revival style residence, popular from about 1870 to 1920. The central pediment, turned balusters, columns and pilasters of the facade lend prominence to this highly visible house in Baraboo. Consistent with the

(20) Cole, 626. Isenberg also built the "Pink Palace," constructed 1924-26 to the designs of Alfred Clas (NR, currently the library of the New College of Sarasota).

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style are the elaborate rear window and porte cochere. The columned porte cochere would have greeted the Ringlings' social and business visitors. The irregular side elevations and the large front porch in this example diminish the formality commonly associated with the style.

Visible from the house, the stables maintain the hipped roof, elaborate cornice, and corner boards of the house. Visually separated from the main residence, the cottage with its sheltered entry is more craftsmanlike in appearance. The small barn's date of construction is unknown. Its vernacular form indicates its utilitarian use. The house and outbuildings have had minimal alterations since their construction.

In conclusion, the house and its outbuildings form the property most closely associated with Charles Ringling during the years of growth and expansion of the Ringling Brothers circus empire. In addition, the house and stables are significant a intact examples of the residential applications of the Georgian Revival style.

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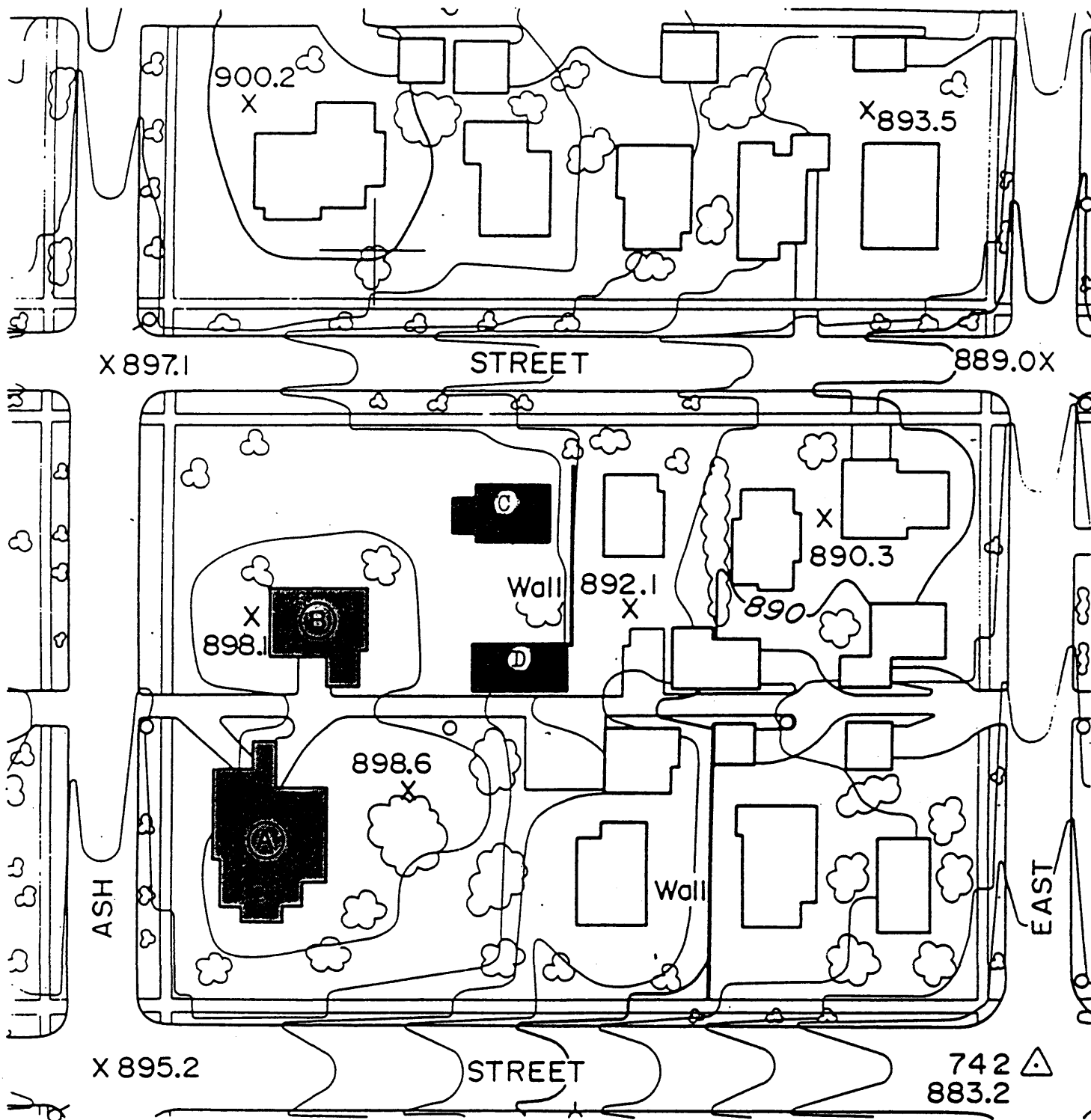
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Verbal Boundary Description:

City of Baraboo, Warren's Subdivision of lots 3, 4, 5, and 6.
Lots 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 5' of lot 14, block 4.

Boundary Justification:

The property nominated encompasses the area historically associated with the Charles Ringling house and its outbuildings.



(A) CHARLES RINGLING HOUSE

(B) CHARLES RINGLING CARRIAGE HOUSE

C Conway Cottage

D Lower Barn

■ Contributing

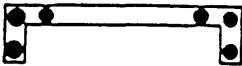
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SITE PLAN

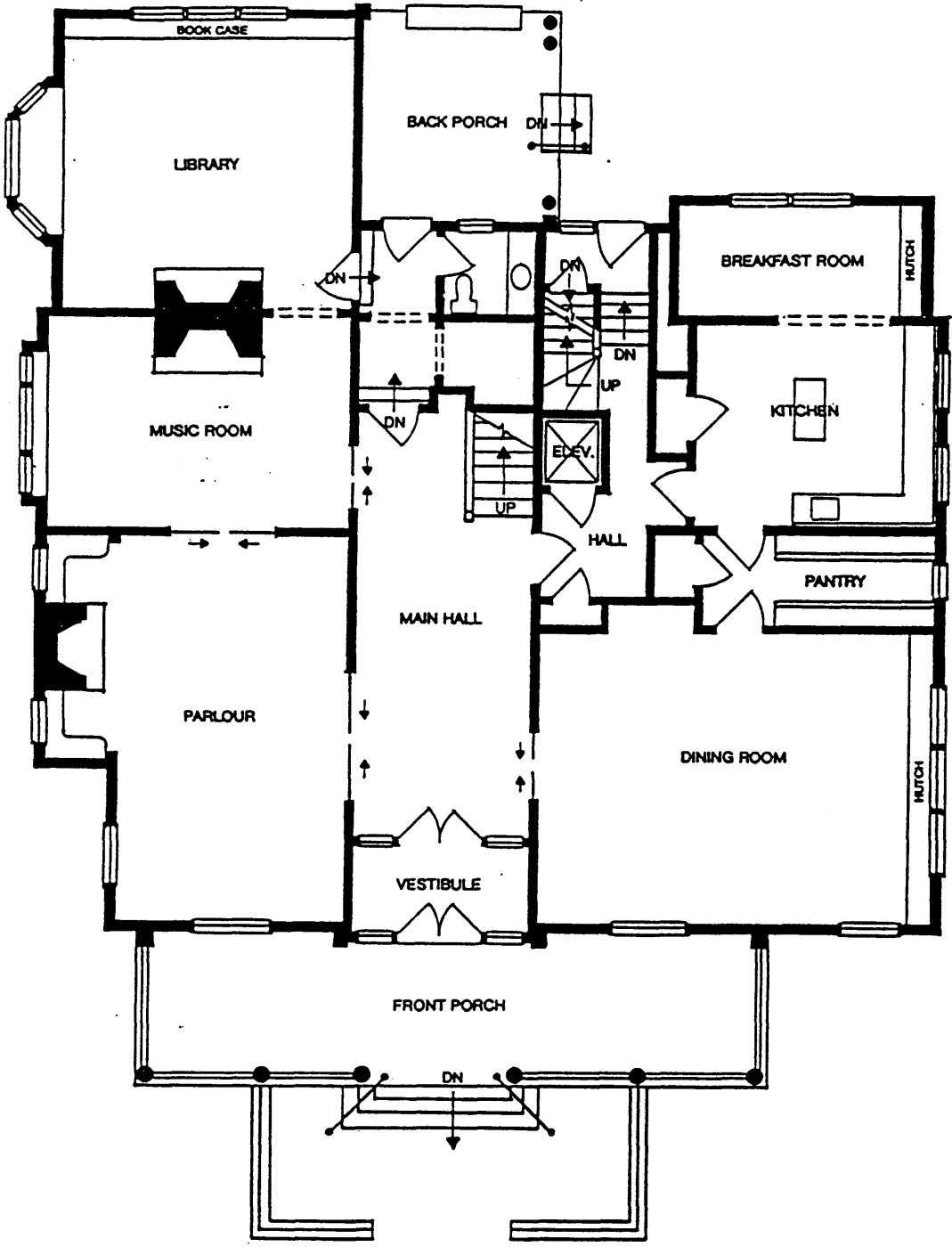


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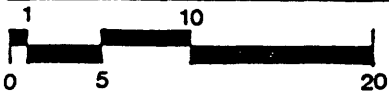
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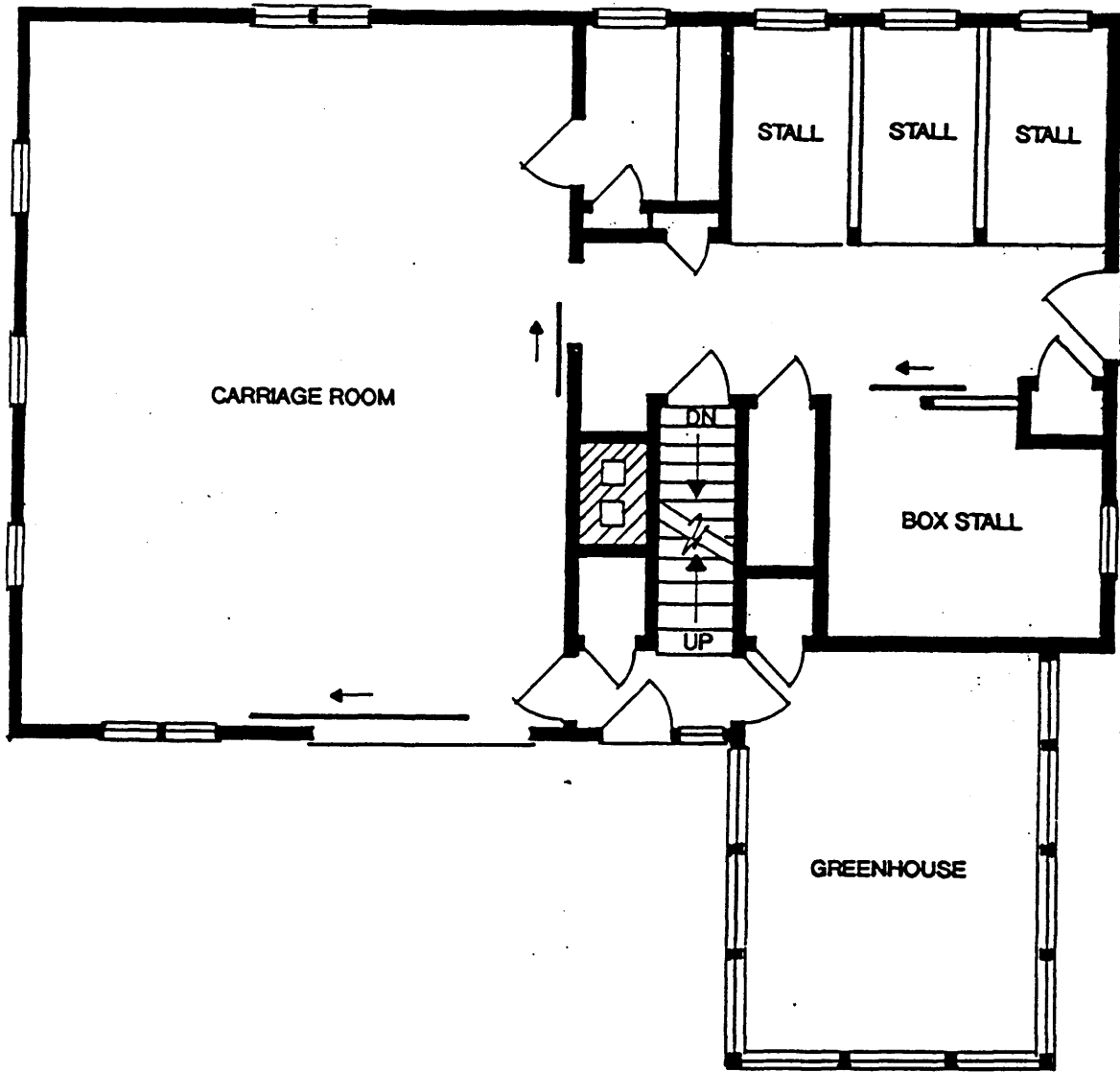
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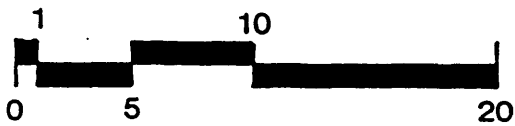
CHARLES RINGLING HOUSE — (MAIN FLOOR)



Charles Ringling House, Baraboo, Sauk County, WI



CHARLES RINGLING CARRIAGE HOUSE



Charles Ringling House, Baraboo, Sauk County, WI