

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 17 1975  
DATE ENTERED OCT 10 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC John H. Barker Mansion

AND/OR COMMON

Barker Civic Center

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

631 Washington Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Michigan City

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd

STATE

Indiana

CODE

18

COUNTY

LaPorte

CODE

091

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Civil City of Michigan City

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Michigan City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

LaPorte

STATE

Indiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The John H. Barker Mansion, which now serves as Michigan City's Civic Center, is one of the most outstanding legacies of a turn of the century freight car manufacturer. In 1837, John H. Barker Sr. came to Michigan City and later founded the Haskell and Barker Car Manufacturing Company. A substantial brick home with ten rooms and a copper roof, was built in 1857. The two story structure, which is now completely covered with ivy growth, was harmoniously incorporated as a rear wing when an elaborate addition was begun in 1901 under the direction of Fredrick Perkins, a prominent architect of the time. Mr. Barker's son had made his father's business very successful, consequently, no expense was spared in the designing of the English Manor style house. Designed as an English Manor House, it consists of 38 rooms, 10 bathrooms, seven fireplaces commissioned and executed in Italy.

The original home was incorporated into the design in a most harmonious manner. The construction was completed in 1905.

The main wing is a 2 1/2 story, four bayed building of hard fired maroon brick with red sandstone trimming. The bricks are in a Flemish bond with a criss cross pattern used above the second floor. A plinth runs below the first story window line and a stone belt course extends above the second story window line. A cross motif, stone balcony caps off a two story bay protrusion at the side of the house. The original roof on the original section was sheathed in with stone. Finials on top grace the ends of the roof while pedimented gable dormers pierce the roof line. The two main chimneys were commissioned and executed in Italy. Three stone flues were joined together to form each of the graceful accents. The windows with leaded panes, have four sashes and transoms at the main level, three on the upper floor. The lintels are plain with stone quoining surrounding each bay while simple mullions separate the sashes. Two narrow arched windows at the main level grace each side of the projecting entrance. The glass is covered with ornate iron work. The main door is centered with engaged columns surrounding and an ornately carved balustrade covering the entrance. An ornate iron flush fan is especially noteworthy, as is the stained glass design in the front double doors.

The interior of the house is equally elegant. The main floor includes a foyer highlighted by a handsomely carved walnut staircase and elegant plaster moulding on the ceiling. Teak, Honduras mahogany and Russian walnut are found throughout the main floor excluding the service facilities and servants quarters. The second floor contains bedrooms, while the third floor houses a gorgeous ballroom and a schoolroom for the owner's children.

The main floor rooms are: entrance foyer, library, drawing room, dining room, kitchen, butlers pantry, Mr. Barker's study and bedroom, valet's quarters, and servant's quarters. The second floor contains bedrooms, bathrooms, a morning room, spacious ballroom, Miss Barker's schoolroom, a governess's bedroom and bath and a trunk room.

All main rooms have ten foot ceilings, the foyer and drawing rooms being elegant moulded plaster in perfect condition. The carved woodwork is Honduras mahogany or Russian walnut. A walnut staircase, elaborately carved is particularly impressive.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Doorways from the library and a hallway opens onto a sunken garden of Italian motif with a fountain and impressive sculpture, all surrounded by an 8 foot brick wall. Columned pergolas and tiled portico, enhance the scene. There is also a small pavilion which shelters one of the many impressive statues.

The building site occupies 1/4 block at the Northwest corner of Washington and 7th Streets, Michigan City, approximately 1/2 acre in area.

The great effort spent in exquisite detailing and proportion which can be clearly seen in the excellently maintained house is somewhat rare to find in the Midwest in the 1900's. It is for this reason the Barker Mansion has considerable architectural merit.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1855, 1901-1905

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Fredrick Perkins

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The original John Barker Mansion, now known as the Barker Civic Center, was built in 1857 by John F. Barker, of English descent, who arrived in Michigan City in 1837. A successful local merchant and manufacturer, he founded a freight car manufacturing business in 1855 which later became known as the Haskell and Barker Car Manufacturing Company.

In 1869, upon the retirement of John F. Barker Sr., the management of the company was turned over to his son, John H. Barker. The business prospered and by the turn of the century, Haskell and Barker had become the leading freight car manufacturing company in the middle west, producing 12,000 freight cars per year.

The Barker Mansion is then important as an example of the choice in building that a successful and wealthy manufacturer for his home at the turn of the century. The older, but simpler original house has been obscured by the 1901 addition but the interior has remained much as it was constructed so a visitor can see what two generations of the same family chose to live in.

The Barker Mansion is significant as an example of turn of the century architecture which often chose a style from Europe to emulate. In this case the job has been done magnificently. It is also interesting to note that in building the new English Manor they chose not to demolish the old family home even though they obscured it from view.

The gardens are also significant as examples of the Italian mode in garden design. The combination of English and Italian features in the overall design of the house makes an interesting combination that could, with lack of care, been less than attractive. In this case, a comfortable feeling of quiet luxury is imparted by the large amount of careful detail.

It is significant, then, for its architecture and as a statement about American life.

