

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received FEB 20 1986

date entered MAR 20 1986

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

**1. Name**

historic Arthur W. Wright House

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 300 4th Avenue N.W. N/A not for publication

city, town Austin N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Mower code 099

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Sam Williams

street & number 1401 3rd. St. N.E.

city, town Austin N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 55912

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mower County Court House, Register of Deeds

street & number N/A

city, town Austin state Minnesota

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources  
has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society—Ft. Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>		<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed				

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The house is a two story frame Italianate residence facing south on the northwest corner of Fourth Avenue N.W. and Second Street N.W.. It has typically low-pitched gabled roofs, narrow gables, large paired scroll saw brackets at the eaves, both rounded and arched very narrow and tall windows, heavily corniced window and door moldings, and shallow rectangular bays, all representative of the Italianate style in its purist form.

The detailing and integrity of a house this age is unusual for this part of Minnesota, far from the Mississippi River. Clapboard facing is 3" wide with cornerboards. Arched windows have wooden keystones with 2-over-2 lights. The house has a heavily molded cornice and a dentilled course above the wide wooden frieze composed of four flush boards. Paired brackets at the eaves are worked with a scroll saw. The shallow bays on the east side of the house have flat roofs, paired windows with rounded corners, wooden rosettes, dentils under the window sills, and panelled bases. The foundation is rusticated limestone. The front first story window is leaded glass. The front-facing gable has paired windows with one wooden keystone per window. Rounded-arched windows have rounded-arched wooden screens. The interior of the house has high ceilings and an open staircase in walnut.

Exterior changes to the house have been minimal, and the architectural integrity is excellent. Shortly after 1905, Arthur Wright added a simple Classical Revival style front porch. The porch has 3" clapboards to match the house and Tuscan columns. The porch windows have fixed glass upper panes with two screens at each opening. The base of the porch crawl space is covered in wooden lattice. In the 1930s, Herald J. Williams purchased the house and changed the first floor library into a bedroom, remodelled the kitchen, and removed a back stairway. The house is now divided into three apartments, two at the rear and east side. A small one-and-a-half story rear addition and an enclosed stairway to the basement on the east side are the only apparent changes to the back of the house.

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Arthur W. Wright House , Austin, Minnesota; Mower County

Continuation sheet

Resource Count

Item number 7

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The Arthur W. Wright House nomination contains  
1 contributing building.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** ca. 1866-1874 **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The house at 300 4th Ave. N.W. in Austin is significant as Mower County's earliest and most intact example of the Italianate style. Italianate style houses were the first high-style of architecture in the county and were used for farmhouse and town house designs alike. Most of the extant Italianate houses in Mower County date from the early 1870s. The first owner of the house is unknown, but the property is most closely associated with Arthur Winfield Wright, Austin realtor, banker, business man and city attorney. The house dates from ca. 1866-1874 and is in a neighborhood just northwest of the center of Austin which contained some of the earliest and finest residences in town, quite a few of which were originally designed in the Italianate style. Across 2nd. St. N.W. to the east is the Cook-Hormel house, on the National Register, which began as an Italianate style house similar to the one at 300 4th Ave. N.W., but was extensively remodelled and enlarged into its present Classical Revival style appearance. The juxtaposition of these two houses illustrates the way the Italianate style could be transformed into the popular Classical Revival style through turn-of-the-century remodelling.

Arthur Winfield Wright was born in 1861 in Ohio and came to Minnesota in 1875, completing his education at Carlton College. Wright lived in the house at 300 4th Ave. N.W. from the middle 1880s until his death. His son, Winfield Wright sold the house to Herald Williams in the early 1930s. Arthur Wright was married in 1885 and admitted to the bar in 1888. His first business was banking through his association with the First National Bank of Austin. In 1887 he formed a partnership with LaFayette French under the name French and Wright. Wright looked after the real estate end of the business until the firm dissolved in 1898. Wright carried on an extensive law practice, was county attorney for eight years, city attorney of Austin for a number of years, and a trustee of Carlton College. Wright also served as a major in the Twelfth Minnesota Regiment in the Spanish War of 1898. In later years he was president and director of the Austin Weed Exterminator Company and treasurer and director of the Alliance Fire Insurance Company of Minnesota.

The Abstract of Title indicates that Julia Wheat and Dr. John N. Wheat warranty deeded the property to Julia Wheat's brother, John F. Cook in 1866 when the property was worth \$1,400. Julia and John F. were children of John F. Cook who built the Cook-Hormel house across the street. By 1874, the property was warranty deeded by W. L. Austin and his wife, Mary, to Converse L. Chase for \$6,000. Although the original owner of the house is not known, the jump in valuation suggests that the house was built ca. 1866-74.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheet, P. 1

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Austin East, Minn. 1982

Quadrangle scale 7.5' Series

UTM References

A 15 501837 4835005  
Zone Easting Northing

B           
Zone Easting Northing

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

Verbal boundary description and justification

The South 108 ft. of Lots 9 and 10, Block 3,  
Morgan's Addition to the City of Austin

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Norene A. Roberts

organization Historical Research, Inc.

date July 9, 1985

street & number 5535 Richmond Curve

telephone (612) 929-2921

city or town Minneapolis

state Minnesota 55410

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Russell W. Fridley*  
date 2/10/86

title Russell W. Fridley  
State Historic Preservation Officer

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*James M. McPherson*  
Keeper of the National Register

date 3/20/86

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Arthur W. Wright House, Austin, Mower County, Minnesota

Continuation sheet Major Biblio. References Item number #9

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Basford, H. O., Austin Souvenir, 1896.

Curtiss-Wedge, Franklyn, ed. The History of Mower County. (Chicago: H. D. Cooper, Jr. and Co., 1911), pp. 974, 975.

Little Sketches of Big Folks. (R. L. Polk and Co, 1907).

Progressive Austin (1904-05), n.p.

Williams, Donna. Written and verbal information on the property supplied between Nov., 1984-July, 1985.