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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

OCT 14 1992

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name BUTLER, NORMAN FRANCIS, HOUSE
other names/site number Butler-Cecil House

2. Location

street & number 207 E. Cherry
city, town Walla Walla
state Washington code WA county Walla Walla code 097 zip code 99362

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private
Category of Property: [X] building(s)
Number of Resources within Property: 1 contributing, 0 noncontributing
Total: 1

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination 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 [X] meets the National Register criteria.
Signature of certifying official: Mary M. Hampson
Date: 9/29/92
Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official:
Date:
State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
[X] entered in the National Register.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain:)
Signature of the Keeper: Guy M. Lapsley
Date of Action: 11/12/92

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

foundation	brick
walls	wood: weatherboard
roof	other: composition
other	N/A

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Norman Francis Butler House is a two-story, wood frame Victorian residence located in Walla Walla's residential northside neighborhood. The irregular roofline and asymmetrical facade, decorative sheathing and ornate wood ornament all reflect the picturesque architectural character of the era. Sited on a modest city lot measuring about 55 by 146 feet, the Butler House is built on a roughly rectangular plan with steeply pitched gabled roofs, intersecting wings, box bays, and gabled dormers.

The house is constructed of a balloon frame resting on a brick foundation; the walls rise to a cross gable roof faced in composition shingles with overhanging eaves. The house is composed of a dominant front-facing gable on the south facade and an intersecting, slightly recessed side-gabled bay. A front porch spans the facade of the side gable, while a one-story wing and kitchen annex projects from the rear. The overall dimensions of the house are roughly 30 feet across the south facade, and 55 feet deep. An enclosed ramp has been constructed with compatible materials across the rear elevation.

The relatively simple plan and form of the house are enlivened by the use of a variety of milled sidings. The first floor is faced with vertical tongue and groove cedar boards which form a kind of exterior wainscoting rising from the foundation to a string course at the window sill level. Above that, the first floor is faced in horizontal drop siding. The first floor is framed by corner boards, and capped by a string course which runs beneath the second floor.

The second floor, which flares slightly over the first, is sided with scalloped cedar shingles. A decorative panel beneath the second floor window on the front gable features tongue and groove siding and decorative fan motifs formed by radiating boards. In the front gable end, the walls are finished with a stick work frieze and vertical boards in the gable peaks. Gable ends on the other elevations and in the dormer windows are sided with shingles of various shapes including fishscale and diamond. A brick chimney with a corbeled cap rises from the roof ridge near the intersection of the two wings.

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Among the most dramatic exterior features of the house are the decorative bargeboards and gable ornaments. These ornaments are fashioned from turned elements, spool-and-spindle work, and jig-sawn trim in the Eastlake style. The front-facing gable end features a decorative king-post truss ornament; gable ends elsewhere are decorated with sunbursts formed by radiating spindles.

Fenestration across the house features wood frame windows in a variety of patterns, including tall and narrow two-over-two double hung sash on the upper floors and side elevations and large first floor windows. Some of the windows feature Queen Anne style upper lights (with small rectangular panes surrounding a larger central pane). Some of the upper floor windows are sheltered by gabled dormers which rise through the eaves of the main roof. Large decorative brackets frame the dormer windows and support the overhanging eaves. Windows rest on bracketed sills and are framed with simple boards which create a stick-like pattern that divides the facade into panels.

Several projections create variety in the massing of the house. A box bay with a flat roof projects at the intersection of the front and side gables on the second floor; a single leaf door leads from the bay to the balcony above the first floor porch. A box bay with a shed roof projects on the first floor east side, lighted on all sides by double hung windows. A bevelled bay window projects on the one story rear wing.

The front porch is supported by decorative turned posts and ornamental brackets, and features a decorative spool and spindle railing and frieze. The wood deck of the porch is approached by one set of wood steps leading to the exterior door. The front door is paneled with a glazed upper panel and an operable transom. In 1928, a second front door was added off the porch to access an upstairs duplex unit. The door was removed in the recent rehabilitation, which also extended the railing across the width of the porch. The porch roof supports a second floor balcony, which is enclosed by a solid railing faced in fish scale shingles.

The interior of the Butler House reflects a typical Victorian plan with a highly articulated floor plan and distinct interior zones. The house contains 1,235 square feet on the first floor and 938 square feet on the second floor. The front entry leads

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to the front parlor, or living room. The stairway leading to the second story is located on the west side of the room. In the early 20th century, the staircase was enclosed to provide a private entrance to the upstairs unit; in the recent rehabilitation, the stairway was reopened and restored. A box bay window is located against the northwest corner. To the north of the living room is a rear dining room, accessed through a single leaf door and lighted by a beveled bay window. The east side of the first floor features a master bedroom and dressing room; originally two rooms, the space has been opened into one space.

Throughout the first floor interior, the house features lath and plaster walls with a smooth finish (covered now with paper), fir floors and cedar millwork trim. New sheetrock walls were installed on the second floor where the original walls had deteriorated beyond repair. The millwork includes fluted window and door surrounds, with plinth blocks and rosette pattern corner blocks; picture rails; and cornice moldings. Doors throughout the house are paneled and many include glazed transoms and original brass hardware. The staircase in the front living room features turned balusters with ornate newel posts. Similar balusters form a railing around the second floor landing.

During the recent rehabilitation, the original coal furnace was replaced by a gas furnace. New central heating and air conditioning was installed, using existing refurbished registers and vents. The original knob and tube electrical wiring was replaced with a new electrical system, and the lead pipes were replaced with copper and PVC. The first floor ceiling, which had been lowered 2.5 feet in the 1930s (thus obscuring the front entry transom and stained glass window) was removed, restoring the first floor ceiling to its original height.

A small gable roof frame garage built in the early 20th century is located to the rear of the house but does not contribute to the historical significance of the property because it substantially post-dates the period of significance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1882	N/A
	Cultural Affiliation	
	N/A	
Significant Person	Architect/Builder	
N/A	Butler, Norman Francis (builder)	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Built in 1882, the Norman Francis Butler House is a significant example of vernacular Victorian residential design in Walla Walla, distinguished by a picturesque form, textural variety, and decorative millwork trim. The house was built by one of the city's pioneer contractors, and reflects characteristic features of the Queen Anne idiom as executed by local builders in the late 19th century. Following an extensive rehabilitation more than a century later, the Butler House survives as one of the best preserved examples of its type and period in the city.

Historical Background: Norman Francis Butler was born in Maine in 1828 and as a young man was apprenticed to a carpenter in his home state. In the spring of 1849, Butler left for Boston, and from there sailed on the Eudones around the Horn, arriving six months later in the gold rush city of San Francisco. Butler engaged in gold mining for awhile, and with his brother ran a ferry between San Francisco and Oakland. By 1860, Butler had made his way from the Bay area to the gold fields of Idaho, where he opened a half-way house on the upper waters of Rock Creek in Idaho. The house was one of the earliest "hotels" in the region, and served both miners and outfitters travelling to the Idaho and Montana mines.

In 1861, with the decline in the Idaho mining region, Butler moved to Walla Walla which, at the time, was the largest city in the Washington Territory. Butler settled on land near the present state penitentiary, and eventually platted his holdings as the Butler Addition. In Walla Walla, Butler started a planing mill with John Dovall, located on the corner of Main and Spokane streets. The mill produced much of the finished lumber for the area during the 1860s. In 1865, Butler married Rebecca Westfall Boggs, a young divorced woman who had come west with her first husband and four children in 1856.

Although he spent a short time living away from Walla Walla on his farmland at Helix in Umatilla County, Oregon, Butler resided in Walla Walla through the late 19th and into the new century, during which time he maintained a contracting and building business which would become a contributing factor to the physical development of the city. Among his many commission were buildings at Fort Walla Walla, residences and

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downtown commercial structures, and early buildings on the Whitman College campus. His residential work includes the Victorian house he built for his family on East Cherry Street in 1882.

Butler's contributions to the community in the years at the turn of the century went beyond his role as builder, reflecting a public spirit that combined business with philanthropy. According to the minutes of the Whitman College's Board of Trustees in 1899, Butler "contributed all his salary but a dollar a day while building the college buildings." (Family records indicate that Butler actually earned \$12 a day, but collected only two dollars, donating the remainder to Whitman.)

In the early 20th century, Dr. Stephen Penrose recounted that "when the new Whitman College first began to loom up as a possibility in 1899 and the contract for new buildings was about to be let, Mr. Butler voluntarily made the proposition to the trustees of the college that he would superintend the construction of the new buildings without cost to the institution. The erection of the Memorial building and Billings Hall was a long and laborious process, involving the expenditure of nearly \$100,000, but Mr. Butler superintended the construction with the same scrupulous fidelity and watchful care that he would have given his own affairs. The excellence of the buildings and the way that they have endured is a tribute to Mr. Butler's oversight as much as to the honesty of the contractors. So too when Reynolds Hall was built in 1902 and again the gymnasium in 1905, Mr. Butler gave his services to the college freely...I doubt if there are any citizens in Walla Walla who have shown a more real and generous friendship for Whitman College than Butler." In addition to his contributions to the College, Butler played a role in civic affairs, and served on the Walla Walla city council in 1894.

Rebecca Butler died in 1885, only three years after the family moved into the new house. In later years, Butler married Eleanor Brotherton, a teacher at the Baker School, and in 1908 sold the property on Cherry and moved to a new house on Clinton where he resided until his death in 1913 at the age of 85.

From 1908 until 1918, the house on Cherry was home to Bernard Rupp, a music instructor at Whitman College. In 1920, the house was purchased by Thomas Casey, assistant chief of the city fire department, who lived there until 1926. He was succeeded by Jacob Holland (1926-1939) and Glen and Mabel Cecil (1941-1991). The house was remodelled about 1938 so that there was a separate apartment upstairs with a new exterior entrance and an enclosed interior stairway. During World War II, in an energy conservation measure, Mrs. Cecil lowered the ceilings in the first floor living room, dining room, and kitchen, covering stained glass transom

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lights in the process. In 1991-92, the property was restored by Gary Wasemiller, who has completed an exterior and interior rehabilitation. In the course of the rehabilitation, the front porch was restored to its original appearance, the additional front doorway removed, the interior staircase opened, and the lowered first floor ceilings restored to their original height.

**Architectural Character:** Walla Walla has an impressive array of Victorian era houses, reflecting the city's prominence and economic stability in the late 19th century. Among the most distinguished are excellent examples of the Italianate Style (the nearby Kirkman House, c. 1880, for example), the Eastlake Style (Miles Moore Mansion, 1884) and the Queen Anne style (the fanciful Philip Ritz House, 1895). In contrast to these more elaborate examples, the Butler House is a fine reflection of vernacular Victorian design, influenced by the availability of millwork and local builders. Like others of its type, the Butler House is a kind of carpenter-Queen Anne in which the form and mass vaguely recall the irregularity of the high style examples; but the full eclecticism of the idiom is achieved not through complexity of form and mass as much as through an imaginative variety of wood sidings, applied stickwork, and ornately decorative trim. Of these Victorian builders' cottages, the Butler House is among the best preserved examples in the city.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Whitman College Board of Trustees, Executive Committee Minutes, May 10, 1899, p. 123.  
Stephen B. L. Penrose, Letter, Walla Walla Bulletin, November, 1913.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property      less than one

UTM References

A    1 1    3 9 6    5 1 0    5 1 0 2 6 0 0  
       Zone    Easting                    Northing

C                    Zone    Easting                    Northing

B                    Zone    Easting                    Northing

D                    Zone    Easting                    Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 8, Block 24                    City of Walla Walla

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Butler House.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/title	Gary Wasemiller, owner; Penny Andres, Historian; edited by L. Garfield
organization	date June, 1992
street & number	207 E. Cherry                    telephone (509) 525-1553
city or town	Walla Walla                    state WA                    zip code 99362