

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

FINAL  
For HCRS use only

received

date entered

**1. Name**

historic Elias Abel House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 317 N. Fairview \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Bloomington \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 7th

state Indiana code 018 county Monroe code 105

**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"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> park
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Donna Lorine Hanley

street & number 317 N. Fairview

city, town Bloomington \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Indiana 47401

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monroe County Courthouse

street & number Kirkwood Avenue

city, town Bloomington \_\_\_\_\_ state Indiana

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Indiana Historic Sites & Structures <sup>Inventory</sup> has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1979 \_\_\_\_\_ federal ☒ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Indiana Department of Natural Resources

city, town Indianapolis \_\_\_\_\_ state Indiana

## 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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved      date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Elias Abel house is a popular but simple version of the Greek Revival style of pre-Civil War days. On the west side of the main structure (in the back) are what appear to be two additions. One of these additions is on the southwest side and is of a salt box style. The other is on the northwest side and has a pent roof.

The frame structure is two stories high and at present is covered with asbestos shingles. These have come off in several places and what was once white clapboard siding can be seen underneath. The main facade is along the east side. At the present time, there is a one story verandah across three-fourths of the main facade. Originally, however, there was only a portico at the main entrance. There are now four columns along this front porch, only one of which may be original.

The roof is made of a composition material and is of medium pitch. The chimneys in the main facade are offset; the one in the salt box addition is extended to rise above the roof line and is located mid-center. All chimneys are of brick.

The roof trim of the main facade has plain projecting eaves, and a plain boxed cornice. The frieze is decorated with lovely dentil molding. All are made of wood. It has plain boxed cornices on the gable ends with a plain return. Again, the dentil molding is carried out along the raking trim and return frieze.

On each corner of the house, the original pilasters are still exposed. The windows are flat with plain molding, plain surrounds, and plain sills, all of wood. Each has double-hung sash with six over six lights, both upstairs and down, though windows upstairs are shorter than those downstairs.

The front door is located in the center of the main facade's five bays. It, like the windows, has a flat heading with plain molding, plain lintel, and plain surrounds, all of wood with no reveal. The door is flush with lights on either side. The transom panel is blind, but originally, it probably was either one or multi-lighted. What appears to be original glass is still in some of these panes.

Other interesting features include the front walk of large handcut limestone, the unusual downspouts, and the lovely old Chinese elm that stands to the left (south) of this house.

Inside, the south half of the house has transoms over each doorway separating the rooms. The transoms are unusual in that they have three lights each, and open horizontally. Other items of interest include the mantel, which may be original, and stairs made of hand-planed boards. The rail, balusters, and newell post seem to be original and may be of cherry. In the attic at the front of the house is a hand hewn walnut log, said to have been a customary addition to bring the owner good luck.

In the basement is a fruit cellar with a full ceiling. The floors are made of hand-made brick. There are limestone walls, and the floor joists were cut by a water driven sawmill.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** Between 1845-1856 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Elias Abel House is architecturally significant as perhaps the finest example of a Greek Revival, central hall plan house in Bloomington. It is also significant because it was built by one of the city's early prominent citizens.

Elias Abel was born in Whythe County, Virginia, in 1800, and moved to Monroe County, Indiana, in 1824. He worked as a day-laborer until he married, when he became a farmer. In 1841 he moved to Bloomington and became the County Treasurer, an office he held for 13 years, then becoming Deputy Treasurer until 1856. He served as a town councilman in 1848, and was elected to the Indiana General Assembly in 1856. Abel served again as County Treasurer from 1858 through 1862, when he retired from active business life.

Abel purchased the property on which the house stands in 1845 for \$250. He sold it in 1856 for \$1,000, which reasonably establishes that the home, or at least a portion of it, was constructed during this time.

The house is what is sometimes referred to as an "I" house, a two-story house with a central hall flanked by a room on each side. The Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory of Monroe County referred to the Abel House as perhaps the best frame example of the "I" house in Bloomington. The Elias Abel House has been designated as historic by the Bloomington Plan Commission.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Monroe Co. Census Records: 1820, 1840, 1850, 1870.

Monroe Co. Probate Records: Books I, II, III, IV, V, VI, and VII.

Monroe Co. History

Looking Back (A Folk History of Bloomington) By Elizabeth Leonard, Nov. 11, 1971.

Bloomington Area Historic Sites and Structures Survey

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Bloomington, IN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	6
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5	3	9	6	2	0
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4	3	3	5	4	2	0
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Zone

Easting

Northing

B 

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Zone

Easting

Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification The South one-half of Lot 14 and the South one-half of Lot 12 and also 5 feet by parallel line of the south side of the north one-half of Lots 12 and 14 of the Fairview Addition.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Donna Hanley/Gayle Cook

organization Bloomington Historical Society

date 3/25/79

street & number 317 N. Fairview (Donna)

telephone 812/336-3217 (Donna Hanley)  
812-332-6317 (Gayle Cook)

city or town Bloomington,

state Indiana

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 5/18/81

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration