

FINAL

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

For NPS use only

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

received

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Van Arsdel, William C., House

and or common The Elms

**2. Location**

street & number 125 Wood Street N/A not for publication

city, town Greencastle N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Putnam code 133

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> museum</span>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> park</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> religious</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> scientific</span>
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> transportation</span>
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> other:</span>

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. and Mrs. Robert West

street & number 125 Wood Street

city, town Greencastle N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46135

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office

street & number Putnam County Courthouse

city, town Greencastle state Indiana 46135

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date 1980 federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
X excellent	deteriorated	unaltered	X original site
good	ruins	X altered	moved date
fair	unexposed		

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

Built in 1907, The Elms is a Colonial Revival house, which sits in the middle of 2.25 acres of land. It is in excellent condition and has many notable Colonial Revival features, such as a balconied entry portico, Corinthian columns, corner pilasters, and glass-paneled doors. The house is on a slightly higher elevation than the street and is reached by a long, semi-circular paved driveway.

The original two-and-one-half story house is a nearly square, 44' x 45', bevel-sided frame structure which faces west. It has a gambrel roof with three dormers across the front and two large gables in the rear. In 1928, a one story, frame addition (40' x 38') with a flat roof was added to the rear of the house and serves as a drawing room and banquet hall.

The facade of the house has three bays and a central entrance. At the entrance, there is a balconied portico supported by two free-standing and two engaged fluted Corinthian columns. The glass-paneled door with side lights has a fan light above it and four small fluted, engaged columns in the Corinthian mode flanking it. A wrought iron railing leads up the front steps and matches a similar railing along the sides of the portico balcony. The portico features a modillioned cornice and this matches, on a smaller scale, the cornice of the house.

Flanking the front entrance are two double-hung sash windows with eight upper lights and a single lower light. The windows are capped with simple entablatures and have plain sills. Directly above them are two identical windows. Above the portico are grouped three windows with double-hung, single light sash. They are capped by a continuous entablature and have a plain sill. Most of the other windows on the house are double-hung sash with either single lights, multiple lights, or multiple upper lights with a single lower light. Some have entablatures with plain sills and others have plain molding surrounding them. There are several stained glass windows.

The cornice of the house is made of wood and features modillions and dentils. Wood corner pilasters frame the house. The gambrel roof, made of asphalt, has a return. There are three dormers placed horizontally across the front of the structure. Each dormer contains a double-hung sash window with six-over-six lights. The center dormer has an arched pediment and roof; the other two have gabled pediments and roofs. The four brick chimneys are both exterior and interior, two on the main gambrel roof and one on each gabled roof at the rear.

The only changes to the exterior of the house are the rear addition and the enclosure of a large porch on the south end into a study, and a small back porch into a kitchen. A small, open "light court" was made where the addition joins the original house.

The main level of the house is divided into seven rooms: living room, dining room, kitchen, bedroom, study, banquet room, and drawing room. Entry to the rooms is through an 11' x 24' center hall.

At the end of the hall, a wide, open stairway, with a painted balustrade and unpainted posts and handrail, leads to the second level. On the stairway landing between the floors, a doorway leads into a solarium which contains a stained glass window. The second floor contains three bedrooms, four baths, and other rooms originally used by servants. On the upper level are additional servants' quarters, divided into three rooms.

The interior of the house is notable for large cove moldings and three marble fireplaces, along with other decorative wood and brick fireplaces, chair rails, French doors, and the solarium.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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** 1907 **Builder Architect** Foltz & Parker, Indianapolis

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Elms is significant as one of the most elaborate and best preserved examples of the Colonial Revival style in Greencastle, and as the former residence of a prominent citizen, as well as several DePauw University Presidents. The house displays many Colonial Revival features: a balconied entry portico, multiple light sash windows, dormers, columns, corner pilasters, a gambrel roof, and a modillioned cornice.

Designed by Foltz and Parker of Indianapolis, The Elms was built in 1907 for William C. VanArsdel, a member of a pioneer Indiana family. His father arrived in the Northwest Territory on an Ohio River flatboat in 1811, five years before Indiana became a state. The family settled in Montgomery County, where William was born on a farm in 1850. He attended Asbury University, now DePauw University, thus beginning his association with Greencastle. He then entered Indiana Law School, and soon after graduation he was active in a law practice and insurance business in Indianapolis. This was the beginning of a prominent career in business and politics. He is best known for founding Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, one of the largest in the country, and for twice being elected to the Indiana General Assembly in the 1890's. He was also active in church affairs and owned much valuable property in downtown Indianapolis.

Around 1905, at the height of his successful career, VanArsdel moved to Greencastle, the community where he spent his college years. He became active in the College Avenue Methodist Church. He purchased the Cupola House, which burned a few years later, and he replaced it with The Elms. It was completed in 1907, according to plans that were drawn in 1906, and VanArsdel lived there until his death in 1922.

Three years later his widow sold the property to DePauw University. From 1925 to 1981 The Elms served as the residence of every DePauw University president, a most influential position in Greencastle. Since its founding, DePauw University has greatly influenced the economic, social, and intellectual life of Greencastle. It is a tremendous physical presence with its buildings spread over many square blocks of the town, including the heart of the downtown area. The student population makes up approximately one-fifth of Greencastle's population.

In 1928, G. Bromley Oxnam, president of the university and a prominent bishop of the Methodist Church, initiated plans for building a rear addition to the house. A drawing room and banquet hall were built to provide suitable space for large-scale entertaining and accommodation of guests. From 1933 until 1981, every important guest of the university was entertained in The Elms, and most guests stayed there. These national and world figures include Harold MacMillan, of England, Prime Minister Diefenbaker, of Canada, Nobel Prize winner and U.N. President Ralph Bunche, Vernon Jordan, David Lillienthal, and anthropologist Margaret Mead.

In 1981, DePauw University sold the house to a private owner, who continues to maintain it in excellent condition.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

A Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly, Vol. I, 1816-1899, Indianapolis, 1980.  
 Cammack, Eleanor. "Houses of the Presidents," DePauw Alumnus, November, 1961.  
 Cottman, George S. Centennial History and Handbook of Indiana. Indianapolis, 1915.  
 Hunt, Mabel L. Cupola House. n.d.  
 The Indianapolis Star, January 8, 1922.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.25 acres

Quadrangle name Greencastle, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	1 6	5 1 2 8 6 0	4 3 8 7 8 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see continuation sheet

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Charles R. Niehaus, Director, Southern Regional Office</u>		
organization	<u>Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana</u>		
date	<u>November 16, 1983</u>		
street & number	<u>111 W. Chestnut Street</u>	telephone	<u>812/284-4534</u>
city or town	<u>Jeffersonville</u>	state	<u>Indiana 47130</u>

## 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

Deputy Director, Dept. of Natural Resources, for  
Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date August 7, 1984

For NPS 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

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY—NOMINATION FORM

Continuation Sheet, Wm. C. VanArsdel House

Item No. 7

Page 1

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The grounds are beautifully landscaped and contain many shrubs and large trees. The property includes a carriage house built at the same time as the house. Situated about 75' behind the house, it is a two-story, Frame building with a gambrel roof and dormer windows. The doors have been changed, and the carriage house is now used as a garage. The grounds also contain a tennis court with a stone wall beside it, a gazebo, and a small reflecting pool with a bronze cupid fountain.

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Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

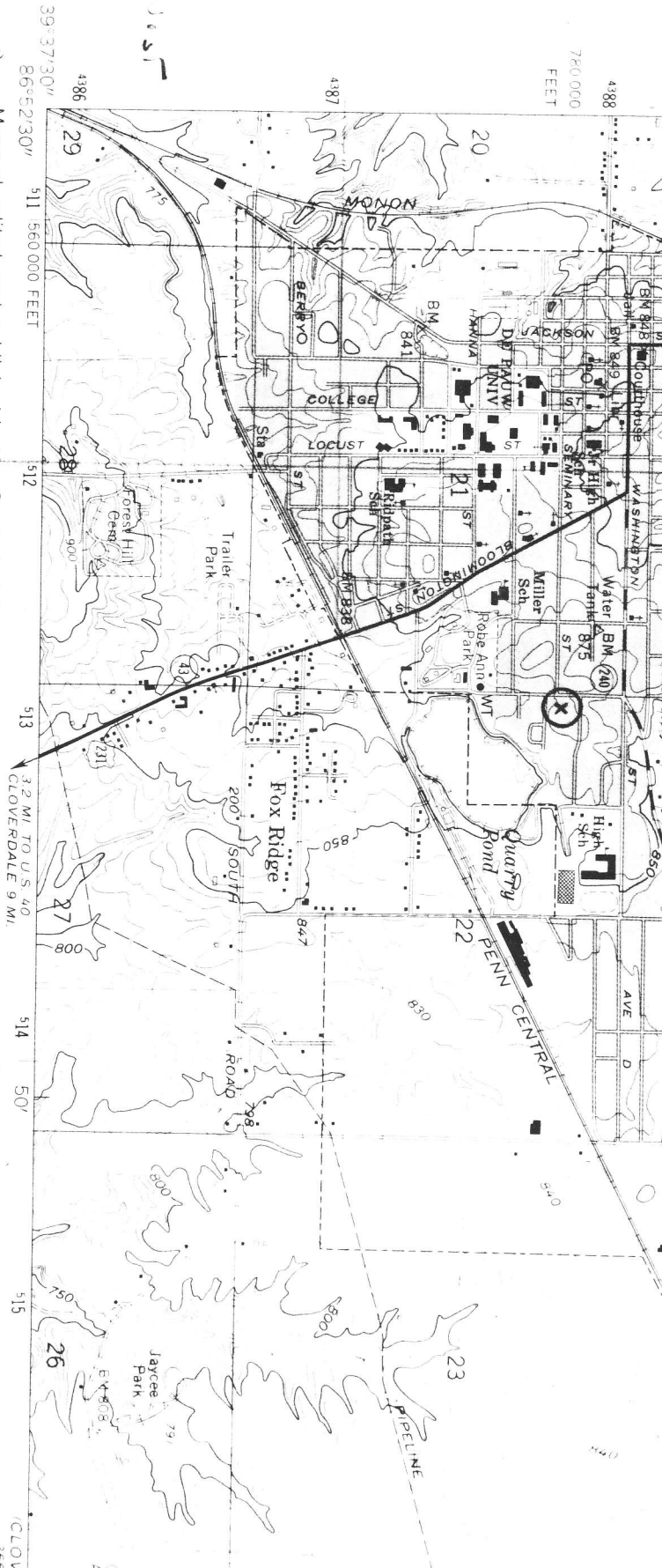
Item 10

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Beginning at the intersection of the North Line of the right-of-way of the Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern Traction Company with the east line of Wood Street of the City of Greencastle, which point is 1,027 feet north and 20 feet East of the Southwest corner of the West half of the Northwest quarter of Section 22; thence eastwardly with the North line of said right-of-way 310.5 feet to the East line of a stone wall extending northerly from said line; thence northerly with said stone wall line and the extension thereof 218 feet, to a point on the north line of Lot Number Two of Knight's enlargement to the City of Greencastle, thence West along the north line of said Lot Number Two 313.5 feet to a point on the East line of said Wood Street; thence South along said line 222.4 feet to the place of beginning.

Wm. C. VanArsdel House  
Greencastle, Indiana  
UTM Reference:  
16/512860/4387810

(REELSVILLE)  
3663 III SW



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

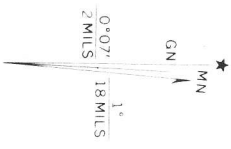
Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1956. Field checked 1958. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000 foot grid based on Indiana coordinate system, west zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 16, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

UTM GRID AND 1970 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



THIS MAP COMPLES WITH NATL.  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL  
AND INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP.

