

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

FINAL

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Osgood, Dr. H.G., House
other names/site number Ahlemeyer, Mina Jane, Property

2. Location

street & number 11 East North Street N/A not for publication
city or town Gosport N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Owen code 119 zip code 47433

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 7/26/99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Osgood, Dr. H.G., House

Owen IN

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building, district, site, structure, object

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values range from 0 to 3.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate, OTHER: English Barn

foundation: STONE: Limestone, walls: WOOD: Weatherboard, roof: ASPHALT, other: BRICK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1850 - c. 1928

Significant Dates

c. 1850

c. 1860

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Osgood, Dr. H.G., House
Name of Property

Owen IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.59

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6	5	2	8	8	2	0	4	3	5	5	4	9	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

3

Zone	Easting						Northing							

2

Zone	Easting						Northing							

4

Zone	Easting						Northing							

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Camille B. Fife

organization The Westerly Group, Inc. date 7/15/98

street & number 556 W 1175 N telephone 812-696-2415

city or town Farmersburg state IN zip code 47850

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mrs. Mina Jane Ahlemeyer

street & number 11 East North Street telephone 812-879-4716

city or town Gosport state IN zip code 47433

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Dr. H.G. Osgood House
Owen County, Indiana

Narrative Description

Summary:

Built between 1860 and 1880 for a prosperous physician, the Dr. H.G. Osgood House is an excellent example of mid-to late nineteenth century architecture as it was exemplified in the small town of Gosport, Indiana. The house is a two story frame residence with Italianate influences and a composite plan which is comprised of a T-plan front section, connected to a square, two-story extension on the north and a small one-story wing on the northwest. In addition, a one-story frame shed and a c. 1950 garage are interconnected. The home is in an excellent state of preservation, with a considerable amount of its original fabric intact on both the exterior and interior. This building, along with two subsidiary structures, a wood privy and carriage barn, are located on a large lot in a residential section of the small town of Gosport, in Owen County, Indiana. The lot has a slight rise toward the north where it is bounded by an east/west alley. On the east and south, the property is defined by Fourth and North streets, respectively. The exterior of the house is finished with wood clapboard siding and various decorative wood details, which reflect the Italianate influences in its construction. The house and its outbuildings are situated on Lot 2 of Block 13 of the original plat of Gosport. The total property also includes lot 1, the northern half of which once contained the First Regular Baptist Church of Gosport. Today, a remnant of this structure, a rough coursed stone wall, stands as a reminder of the former building.

Description:

The Osgood House was completed in at least two episodes during the period of significance, between 1850 and 1928. The rear wing of the main house is probably the oldest. Judging from evidence in the deed entries for the property, a structure was erected on the site somewhere between 1846, when Lot 2, Block 13 was purchased for \$15 by Morris Lucas and 1853 when it was sold to John C. Dunagan for \$800. This rear wing is a two-story frame structure, with a dressed stone foundation and basement constructed of rough coursed limestone, to a depth of approximately six feet, with a contemporary concrete floor and shoring. An entry has been roughly cut in the basement wall on the south side to provide access to a dug space in the north part of the main house where a modern furnace is located. Modern concrete floor and walls have been installed. Access to the basement or

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Dr. H.G. Osgood House
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cellar was once available from an outside entry at ground level. Today, it is reached by an internal stair within the north side of the square plan wing. A metal cover protects the exterior entry, once probably used for coal. The floor joists in this part of the house are not remarkable, but there is a large, hewn summer beam visible on the south side. A similar beam may be present on the north, but is not visible, because of stair and wall construction in that area.

The exterior walls of the north wing are of the same narrow board clapboard as the main house and are uniform with it, indicating that the present siding was probably installed when the latter was built. The entry on the west side of this wing consists of a central, paneled door with a transom, which is presently blocked. This door has a dressed limestone block for its stoop. Two one/over/one light, double-hung windows with extremely simple wood surrounds flank the entry. The ceiling heights of this wing are considerably shorter than those of the south or main part of the house, thus necessitating a step up/down on the second floor. The gable roof of the house has moderately wide eaves, with a plain frieze. Corner boards with simple capitals adorn the northeast corner and the juncture between this wing and an adjacent office/studio to the north. These boards match those on the main wing. Two dormers on the east and west roofs of this wing have decorated, boxed cornices, plain friezes and double hung, four/over/four light windows. Judging by their detailing, these can probably be dated to the period of the main wing and/or office, between 1860 and 1880. On the north side of this wing (See Photo No. 4), is a slightly wider, six/over six light double hung window which may date from an earlier era. Thus, internal evidence in the structure indicates that the earliest building on the site was probably this wing, along with appropriate outbuildings.

The south or main part of the house is a gable roofed, two and a half story, T-plan structure with simple, decorative boxed cornices and a plain frieze. The main section of the house dates to Dr. Osgood's ownership and reflects his influence and activities from 1860 until his death in 1913. Brick chimneys on the east leg of the "T" and at the intersection of the roof reflect the presence of fireplaces below. Narrow wood clapboard siding and simple corner boards with chaste capitals complete the wall treatment. The foundation is of smooth dressed, coursed limestone.

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The fenestration on the front, or south facade of the building consists of three bays or openings on the east leg of the "T" and two on the south leg. There are no windows on the east face of the east wing. The west leg of the "T" contains four windows on both first and second floors, although the first bays are mock openings, comprised of a surround and shutters, probably original. This treatment maintains the regularity of the fenestration on the long west facade and strengthens its symmetrical design. The windows are all narrow, four/over/four light, double hung, with wood surrounds surmounted by shaped window heads, and decorated, projecting cornices. These have modified labels. It is interesting to note that the shuttered windows on the west facade, have segmental arches, a feature which is only implied through a recessed panel on the other windows. Round attic vents on the south and east gable ends have wood surrounds, with modified keystones and a flat base with curved base supports, all scroll cut carpentry, mounted as an applique to the facade.

A particularly ornate main entry decorates the formal front entry to the house. The main door, of paneled wood, with a segmental arched upper light, and a decorated surround, is enframed within an architrave consisting of narrow sidelights and a large transom, the upper border of which flows in a gentle, elliptical arch with a graceful, shaped upper cornice in the style of the house windows. This cornice is decorated with three rows of molding, emphasizing the formality of the entrance. Labels are inferred on the upper sides by the graceful cut of the surround. At the base of the door surround, deeply molded panels complete the ensemble. A modern aluminum storm door has been installed for energy conservation, but otherwise this entry is intact.

The house has two decorated porches. The ornate front porch, facing North Street, is set into the recess formed by the east and south legs of the "T". Its bays correspond to the main openings on the front facade. Round arches are formed by curved lintels, in filled with openwork wood tracery between the square posts. The latter are topped by chaste square capitals at the springing line of the arches and decorated between post and roofline with ornate, scrolled brackets. In the center of the porch arches are mock keystones, with decorative openwork and hanging pendants. Similar detailing is carried out on the east side of the front porch. There are two entrances to the porch which contains wood flooring and a stone foundation. The front entry leads to the main door via limestone steps and a sloping walk comprised of limestone slabs. The side entry on the east is smaller

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Dr. H.G. Osgood House
Owen County, Indiana

and leads to a concrete walk, from which one can access the sidewalk on North Street, passing by a decorative cast concrete block well enclosure, or around the house to the side porch. The latter is similar to the front porch, except more modest in detail. The side porch is fit within the north leg of the "T" with two in fill areas on the north and south sides. The former of these was present as early as 1895, if not before, and forms part of the kitchen, now housed in the old north wing. The southern in fill was completed after 1950 and contains a bathroom. The present side entrance to the house is off the porch and leads into the old wing/kitchen.

The house reflects the activities of its prominent owners, in the attached office/studio which is connected to the old north wing of the main house. This is a one story, clapboard sided, gable roofed building, with four/over/four light double hung windows. According to local information, it was originally used as an office by Dr. Osgood, with public access from the old wing, we assume, as today, from either the east or the west side, or from a separate entrance in the addition, now occluded by the garage. A Sanborn map of 1895 shows this addition, in its present location, and the construction techniques of the unit argue for its erection during the early part of Dr. Osgood's tenure. Dr. Osgood purchased the southern half of the neighboring Lot 1 of Block 13 from the Baptist Church in 1863. According to the Sanborn insurance maps, and a local newspaper article, a separate one-story office building was located on this part of the property, at the corner of Fourth and E. North Streets, situated very close to the street. This was used as an office by Dr. Osgood from an early date. In later years, it served as the medical office of Dr. C. L. Ritter, Dr. Osgood's son-in-law. A small, one-story, rectangular plan building, it was removed from the site in 1941.

The Main House retains its original dark-stained interior woodwork. This includes the framed interior of the main entry, which contains decorative holdings and paneled door with an upper light (see Photos No. 11 & 15). The central stair in the main hall is graced with a turned newel post and stair rails, as well as wood moldings and stairs (Photos no. 11, 14 & 15). The main parlor has an interesting marble fireplace mantle and a cast iron fireboard. Two openings between the north and south parlors contain decorative spindlework (Photo No. 12).

Typical of the interior detailing is the fireplace cast iron fireboard and marble mantle in the east bedroom on the ground floor where original

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wood flooring is also visible (as it is in many other areas of the house) (see Photo No. 13). The decorative moldings present throughout the main house are typical of those seen on the door surround between the front parlor and the main stair hall (Photos no. 15 & 21). The doors in many of the interior rooms, especially on the second floor are grained (see Photos No. 16, 18 & 20). The doorway on the second floor, which leads from the northernmost bedroom of the main house to the old north wing is considerably shorter than those in the newer part of the house, reflecting the lower ceilings in the older wing. There is also a step down from this bedroom to the room on the second floor of the north wing which has been finished on the interior (see Photos No. 18 & 19).

Also connected to the Osgood House, on the north is a one-story frame shed, with a gable roof and simple barge boards. It's walls are finished with vertical board siding. This has been a part of the extended house since at least 1928, according to Sanborn maps for 1910 and 1928, when the configuration of the house was depicted much as it appears today (with the exception of the modern garage addition). The final addition to the house, as mentioned before, was emplaced after the present owners purchased the house in 1951. This extension is a low, one-story building with a shed roof which does not protrude from the house, nor occlude the main facades. It contains two paneled doors and one side window, and is sensitively screened by plants.

Other buildings present at the site today include a clapboard sided privy, with a gable roof, exposed and trimmed rafters and corner boards with round molding. The entry has a simple wood surround (see photos No. 5 & 7). This building has been in its current location since 1928 and probably dates to the early 1920s. A vertical board sided carriage barn is located at the extreme north edge of the lot. This two story frame building is rectangular in plan, with a partial random coursed stone foundation. The medium gable roof is covered in corrugated metal roofing with rafters exposed. It is likely that the foundation and basic frame of this structure dates to a very early period. Sanborn maps from 1895 through 1928 show such a building present at the same location, initially indicated as a stable house. Dr. Osgood would have required a building for his horse and carriage, since his practice ranged throughout several counties. The present openings in the north facade include two half-sized second floor batten doors to the hay loft, with surface-mounted hinges, and two smaller openings on the first floor. The main door moves on a sliding

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Dr. H.G. Osgood House
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rail and is comprised of a large, rough vertical board flat, with a smaller personnel door cut into its left side, and attached with hinges like those on the windows. There is a similar hinged door of vertical boards on the south side which provides access from the barn to the privy and house. A small window faced a north/south alley between the Osgood property and that of their neighbors to the west. (This alley is no longer active.) The barn has probably had many siding and roof repairs over the years.

The Baptist Church, once located in the northeast quadrant of the site was demolished in 1960 when the congregation moved to a new building at another location in town. The wall which remains is a pleasant addition to the site. It includes approximately six courses of rough dressed limestone, with trees and shrubs on either side and a small birdbath. Other elements of the landscape include a curved drive leading from E. North Street, in the southeast quadrant of the property, to the garage north of the side porch. A small pear and apple orchard, along with shade trees soften the landscape in most of Lot 1, providing a gracious setting for the house. The property slopes slightly to the north and northwest, with the high point in the area of the carriage barn. Plants around the south side of the barn, between the privy and the garage, include tall trees which provide an effective backdrop to the house. The area near the side porch includes a concrete and stone walk, a second well with an antique pump and a (no longer used) cistern, in the bend between the east wing and the side porch. The latter is underground, with only the stone lid visible in a planted area adjacent to the porch and house.

The Dr. H.G. Osgood House on E. North Street is just one block north of the small commercial center of Main Street. South of the house, the rear of the buildings which comprise this district are visible. A few are located on Fourth Street, south of E. North Street. The north side of E. North Street is clearly residential, however. Striking historic homes like the Osgood House and its neighbor to the west, a Gothic Revival masterpiece, as well as other notable properties, define a distinctive neighborhood, typical of small nineteenth-century rural towns. Set back from the street, but with a wide stone walk, the Osgood House typifies the best of such communities, where residential and commercial, urban and rural lived in easy, graceful harmony.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Dr. H.G. Osgood House is significant as an excellent example of a mid-to late nineteenth century Victorian house with Italianate detailing. Although vernacular in design, the building is in excellent condition and contains pristine interior and exterior details of a high order, including extensive spindle work. It also gains significance for its association with the commercial and population growth which occurred in the small town of Gosport, Indiana during the height of the period of significance, and the resultant development of the town's professional/medical service sector.

Chronology

The chronology of the property can be traced through the deed transfers which occurred over its long history. Lot 2, Block 13, was first recorded in September of 1816, as part of a 254.52 acre parcel in Section 32, Township 11 N, Range 2 W, purchased by John Stipp. The same property was assigned to Andrew Huston by 1824 and by 1829 36 acres had been purchased by Abner Alexander and Ephraim Goss who platted it, in that year as the town of Gosport. By 1840 Shadrock and Jane Pierson were owners of Lots 2 and 4 in Block 13 of the town of Gosport, and sold them to William A. Stark. In 1846, Mr. Stark sold Lot 2 to Morris Lucas for \$15. By 1853, the lot had changed hands again, this time to John C. Dunagan for \$800 "together with all privileges and appurtenances". It is likely from this deed evidence, along with the internal evidence in the house, (including an oversize, hand adzed summer beam, and rough coursed stone foundation), that a small house, and probably at least one outbuilding had been constructed on Lot 2 by the 1850s. John Dunagan sold the property, along with Lot 3 in the same Block to Elijah Dyer in 1856, for \$1200 and Dr. Howard G. Osgood bought Lot 2 from Mr. & Mrs. Dyer four years later, in January of 1860 for \$900.

Lot 1, Block 13 (along with other property) was sold by Goss and Alexander to Mary and Henry Sandy in 1829. By 1841 it was owned by Griffin and Cary Taylor (it is not known how they acquired it), who sold it, along with Lot 3, that year to James Beck for \$115. Lot 1 changed hands several times -- owners included Joseph Warren, Othenial B. Dunagen, Pleasant Mayfield and Allen Asher -- before April of 1855, when it was deeded to the Trustees of the Little Mount Baptist Church for \$800. The Little Mount Church was located outside of Gosport, but served to help organize the new

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building and property in town. Local church histories indicate that the Gosport Baptist Church was constructed of brick on the site in 1854. By 1858, it had been transferred to the Trustees of the newly organized First Regular Baptist Church of Gosport, for a sum of \$2,000.

During the early period of ownership of Lot 1, probably between 1840 and 1855, a small, two-room wood building had been constructed (originally as a residence) on the southeast part of the lot. It was located on the edge of the property, facing the corner of E. North and Fourth Street. According to a local newspaper article of 1941, it served as a physician's office from as early as 1854.¹ In 1863, the trustees of the Regular Baptist Church of Gosport sold the southern part of Lot 1 to Dr. H.G. Osgood. The dimensions of this portion of the lot were approximately 80 by 66 feet and included all of the property eight feet south of the church to North Street and west to the property line of Lot 2. The small building on the southeast corner of Lot 1 was included and remained on the site until 1941 when it was relocated to a farm outside the city.² With this purchase, Dr. Osgood secured the property he would own and/or occupy on E. North Street until his death in March of 1913, although he purchased other parcels in the town and the surrounding area during his lifetime. In 1889, Dr. Osgood deeded the property to his wife Hattie, for "love and affection". Mrs. Osgood died in 1890 and by 1893, he had deeded his interests in the two lots, along with other property, to his three daughters, although he continued to live and work there.

By 1918, five years after Dr. Osgood's death, Lots 1 and 2 had become the property of Eliza E. Strain, the middle daughter, who had married Jerome F. Strain in 1894. Mrs. Strain, affectionately known as "Bessie", lived in the home until her death in December, 1950 at the age of 84. The property was sold by Mrs. Strain's heirs, which included her surviving sister, Lora Rumbarger, the children of her niece, Thomas Dodd, Betty Dodd Hartley and Charlotte Dodd Adams, along with their spouses and children. The purchasers of the property, which included the southern part of Lot 1 and all of Lot 2, were Francis and Mina Jane Ahlemeyer. In 1962 the trustees of the Baptist Church deeded the northern part of Lot 1 to the Ahlemeyer's for \$1. The Church had relocated to a new site and the old building had been demolished by the congregation.

¹Gosport Leader, _____ 1941, collection of the Fortnightly Club.

²Ibid.

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There are sparse clues as to the date of construction of the house in its present configuration, but two mortgages recorded by Dr. Osgood in 1877 are interesting. In September of that year, Dr. Osgood mortgaged some of the property he owned to Samuel P. Langdon for \$1,997. This appears to have been used to pay notes taken in 1875 (for \$1,766) and in 1876 (for \$231), the latter to pay off "purchase money" for real estate. However, Dr. Osgood owned additional real estate besides the property on E. North Street, thus this could reflect such purchases, and have nothing to do with the Osgood home. This mortgage was paid off in April of 1883. In October of 1877, Dr. Osgood took an additional mortgage on his various properties (including Lots 1 & 2) in the amount of \$2,781.55. A partial release was paid in 1879 and this mortgage was fully paid in August of 1883.³

While the evidence of this mortgage activity is not definitive, it is possible that Dr. Osgood may have made the substantial and highly decorative improvements to his property, including the main house, in late 1877. Certainly, the Italianate style was very popular at this time. In addition, Mrs. Osgood had given birth to their third (surviving) child in 1873, so the family had grown to five. Other factors argue for a date midway between the purchase in 1860 and c.1880. Dr. Osgood had only been in practice in Gosport since mid-1856, and had married Hattie Lyons in 1859.⁴ By 1860, when he purchased the first part of the property (Lot 2) Mrs. Osgood was expecting their first child, Anna. But Dr. Osgood began service in the Civil War in February of 1863 (to return to Gosport in mid 1864), and also purchased part of Lot 1 in the same year. These purchases, as well as the additional expenses of feeding a growing family, may have hampered the Osgood's ability to invest in an extensive new home when the property was purchased in 1860, only four years after beginning his practice.

Sanborn Maps from 1895, 1910 and 1928 show the evolution of some of the subsidiary buildings on the present property. The earliest shows a brick outhouse facing the alley on the north and adjacent to the church,

³Abstract of lots 1 & 2, Block 13, property of Mrs. Mina Jane Ahlemeyer (all references to changes in ownership are from this document).

⁴Charles Blanchard, *History of Owen County, 1884, enlarged ... 1890*, Reprinted, Spencer, IN: Owen County Historical Society, 1977, pp. 897-898.

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but actually located on Dr. Osgood's property. In addition to the carriage barn in the northwest corner, a one story corn-crib was present and other one story sheds. By 1928, a small building (undoubtedly the present privy) was in place and the interconnected wings were shown as they are today, with the exception of the garage. According to the owner, a corn-crib and shed were removed at the time of purchase in the 1950s. As previously mentioned, the doctor's office in the southeast corner was removed in 1941.

The Town of Gosport and Owen County

The Osgood House grew and developed along with the small community of Gosport, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth. Situated on a romantic spot in the southeastern part of Owen County, along the majestic White River in Wayne Township, the town enjoyed success first from river traffic, and later through the advent of the railroad. Settlers to the area which would become Owen County, in south central Indiana began to arrive in 1817 and 1818. Those who would plan and populate the town of Gosport were among the earliest of these, when Owen County was organized in 1818, although Wayne Township was not included in the county's boundary until 1821-22.⁵ The town gained population and some commercial success in this early decade as a shipping point for flat-boats plying goods along the White River. Two early settlers, Ephraim Goss and Abner Alexander instigated a survey of the 36 acres which would become the town, purchased the site and recorded the plat in June of 1829.⁶ The town was laid out on a sloping tract of land in sections 31 and 32, Township 11 North, Range 10 West, part of the property belonging to Andrew J. Huston of Circleville, Ohio. The original plat included sixteen Blocks and 112 Lots, with Adams, Market and Jackson Streets (later changed to numbered streets) running in a north/south direction and North, Main and South Streets in an east/west direction. The town was bounded on the east by the river, with a bluff donated by the founders for use by the public. The town site was located on this bluff and the high ground to the west and north, bringing it well above the flood

⁵Owen County Historical & Genealogical Society, *Owen County, Indiana, A History*, Spencer, Indiana: Owen Co. Hist. & Gen. Soc., 1994, p. 96.

⁶Blanchard, p. 712.

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plain. Block 13, the present location of the Osgood House was in the extreme northwest section of the old town.⁷

The land on which Gosport is situated, and much of Owen County, is graced with dramatic topography, the result of underlying old limestone strata which was uplifted in endless geologic time and slowly eroded to its present conformation. Just across the river and to the south, Monroe County, with its famed limestone quarries at Bedford, Oolitic and Bloomington, provided much of the nation's supply of this popular stone, including that used on New York's Empire State Building. The stone used for the foundations of the Osgood House undoubtedly came from local quarries. The Keokuk limestone beds were at Gosport and were considered a very durable stone for foundation walls of buildings, cellar walls and other rough, rubble masonry.⁸ Some quarry or Oolitic stone (the same fine quality strain as found at Bedford) was located in Owen County, and a St. Louis limestone was quarried near Spencer. It was known as "Spencer Stone" and was used for both above and below ground construction. Massive buildings, including several churches, constructed of this stone can still be seen today in nearby Spencer, the county seat. Of poorer quality, the Kaskasia limestone was used primarily for road material in Owen County and Chester sandstone, which was durable for buildings was also quarried in the county, along with other extractive materials.⁹

During the nineteenth century, agriculture was a major industry and the rich alluvial bottom lands of the White and Eel rivers in Owen County were highly productive. The rivers also provided water power for flour and saw mills before the active use of steam-generated energy. Timber was harvested in large quantities and lumber was a popular commercial product. The rolling hills of Wayne Township, underlaid with limestone were perfect for blue grass and stock raising, including cattle, horses and pigs. The latter were an important part of Gosport's financial success. Other resources included some coal (in the southwest) and vast amounts of clays, for brick, pottery and tile manufacturing. In 1884, a positive future for the growth of fruit trees was predicted and pure spring waters were said to

⁷Original Plat of the Town of Gosport, reproduced from Page 188, Deed Record No. 2, Office of the Recorder of Owen County, in Ahlemeyer Abstract.

⁸Blanchard, p. 554.

⁹Ibid.

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be found in almost every quarter section. The latter were surely present in the Osgood property. The well on the side of the house was renown for its cool, clear water.

Gosport became a prominent regional livestock market in its early years, thanks to its river access. Pork packing and shipping became its primary industry during the two decades before 1850. Still, the town was slow to grow until after 1856, when the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago (later the Monon line) was completed through the village and it became the first town in the county to host passenger and freight travel. With the boost this provided, it quickly became a prime trading town in the area.¹⁰ It was during this period of prosperity that the young Dr. Osgood arrived in the community, anxious to begin his medical practice in a thriving location. A second railroad, the Indianapolis & Vincennes was completed in the late 1860s. The town was incorporated in 1865 and by 1883, ten daily trains passed through Gosport on the two lines. The railroads quickly usurped river traffic, since they were more reliable, faster and could operate at all seasons of the year. By 1871, a covered bridge over the White River made the crossing easier, although a ferry still operated on the south. The Indianapolis & Vincennes Railroad passed through the county seat at Spencer, to the south, thus adding to its economic growth and draining some activity from Gosport. Nonetheless, the town continued to prosper; a crossing of the two railroad lines, called Gosport Junction, just northeast of the town helped maintain its momentum.¹¹

Electricity was provided as early as 1897, and the town's commercial center continued to see new brick buildings constructed. However, several devastating fires were responsible for the loss of many, including a large business block which burned in 1919 and wasn't fully replaced until 1970. The peak of the town's economic growth occurred between the 1850s and the first decades of the new century. At the turn of the century, an iron bridge crossed the river, making access to Monroe County easier. Gosport's commerce and industry continued to prosper until the late 1920s, when new road construction was begun which would re-route State Road 67 away from

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 716.

¹¹ Owen County Hist. & Genealogical Society, pp. 96-97.

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the town.¹² Although the road-building activity provided a boon through the first years of the depression, this event, along with the rise of the automobile and decline of the railroad foreshadowed a downturn.

The Osgood House and site can be associated with the town's period of greatest growth and development. It was built and improved, like the town, during the latter half of the nineteenth century and continued to prosper well into the first part of the twentieth.

Dr. Osgood and Gosport's Medical History:

The medical profession was well represented in Gosport during the nineteenth century, with six physicians practicing in 1884.¹³ The Osgood property is also associated with the medical history of the town from about 1854, when, according to a local newspaper account, a Dr. Young arrived from Ohio and opened a medical office in the small, two room building then located on the southeast corner of Lot 1, Block 13. Two years later, Dr. Howard G. Osgood arrived and joined Dr. Young in his practice. Evidently it wasn't too long before Dr. Young left, selling his interest in the practice to Dr. Osgood. Dr. Osgood continued to use this building as his office and was joined by Dr. Caleb L. Ritter, who later married Dr. Osgood's eldest daughter, Anna. Although Dr. Ritter moved his practice to Indianapolis in the late 1880s, he returned to Gosport in 1920 and once again used the old office building until his death in 1928.¹⁴ Local tradition and the presence of cabinets in the addition to the north wing of the Osgood House also argue for its use as a medical office. It is possible that additional space for reports, writing and patients was needed, especially during the time that both Dr. Osgood and Dr. Ritter were practicing together.

Upon his death in 1913, Dr. Howard G. Osgood was celebrated as a man of industry, financial competence and renown -- one of the foremost

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Blanchard, p. 715.

¹⁴ *The Gosport Reporter*, "Digging Up Interesting Facts", Thursday, July 31, 1941.

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citizens of the county.¹⁵ He was born in Franklin County, Massachusetts in September of 1833 to a farm family who proudly traced their ancestry in this country back many generations. He attended Amherst academy for one year at the age of nineteen. As was common during the nineteenth century, he continued his medical education by studying with a practicing physician, Dr. Cook of Wendall, Massachusetts for one year. Between 1853 and 1855 he taught for a semester and then resumed study with physicians in Greenfield, Massachusetts. In the fall of 1855 he completed his training with a year at the Cincinnati Medical College in Ohio. By June of 1856 he had relocated to Bloomington, Indiana, and within a short period of time, to Gosport where he began his practice of medicine. For the next fifty-plus years, he would enjoy both a lucrative practice in the town as well as considerable local esteem.¹⁶

The Osgood Family at East North Street:

Three years after setting up his practice in Gosport, the young doctor married Hattie Lyons, a girl from the prosperous Ohio River town of New Albany, Indiana in the southeast corner of the state. One year later he bought the house on E. North Street and by 1863 he also owned the land on which the small office building stood. Three generations of the family would occupy the house, until its sale in 1951 to the present owners. Within the scale of a small Midwestern town, they lived lives of modest wealth, and considerable professional and intellectual aspirations. The house reflects these qualities, in its condition and style.

Hattie and Howard's first child was born in 1860, a daughter named Anna. They would eventually have four daughters, three of whom lived beyond infancy. The second was born in 1866 and named Elizabeth, but always called "Bessie" and the third daughter arrived in 1873, named Lora. Dr. Osgood and his wife were able to provide good educations for their daughters, at least two of them attended Asbury College (now DePauw University) in Greencastle, Indiana. The eldest daughter Anna married a young man who came to study medicine with her father, and went on to practice medicine in Gosport and for a time, Indianapolis, Dr. Caleb L. Ritter. The second daughter, Bessie, married a local man, Jerome L. Strain

¹⁵Local Gosport Newspaper in the collection of the Fortnightly Club, Gosport, Indiana, dated March 13, 1913.

¹⁶Blanchard, pp. 897-98.

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who was the town agent for the Monon Railroad. She continued to live in the Osgood home until her death in 1950, one year following that of her husband. The third daughter, Lora, married Frederick Burton, a local man who aspired to a career in the theater. He enjoyed success at first with a part in a George Ade production, "The College Widow", which toured the country, including as far away as Alaska. As Mrs. Burton, Lora traveled with him, possibly even overseas, when he toured in London in 1907. The couple were divorced sometime after 1910 and Lora returned to Gosport, while Frederick continued to tour the country, eventually landing in Hollywood, where he achieved fame as a character actor in the movies. He died in 1957. Lora later married Frank Rumbarger, with whom she made a home in Philadelphia for a number of years. He died in 1933, and she passed away in 1955 after an illness of about five years.¹⁷

The Osgood family were known for their participation in church and community affairs. Mrs. Osgood, who died prematurely of illness in 1890 at the age of 54, was known for her dedication to the local Methodist Episcopal Church. When the present brick edifice was constructed in 1880-1881 at a cost of \$5,000, Mrs. H.G. Osgood was one of four women who, along with the pastor, were credited with making it possible. Dr. Osgood was said to have bought and installed the church's first furnace around 1906.¹⁸ The Methodist Church in Gosport was also closely tied with the Masonic Order and temperance concerns, organizations and issues with which the doctor, his wife and their daughters were also associated.

During the Civil War, in January of 1863, Dr. Osgood was appointed Assistant Surgeon in the Fifth Indiana volunteer Cavalry. He served in this capacity until he was honorably discharged because of ill health in May of 1864, when he returned to Gosport. He continued correspondence with veterans, however (most were seeking documentation for wartime injuries or illnesses) until as late as 1895. Following the Civil War, his practice surged, as did the town of Osgood (it was incorporated in 1865). By the

¹⁷ Various obituaries of Osgood family members in the collection of the Spencer, Owen County Library and Dixie Kline, "Gosport Man Played in Early Movies", newspaper article in the collection of the Fortnightly Club, Gosport, IN.

¹⁸Obituary of Harriet Lyons Osgood, *Gosport Enterprise*, September 19, 1890, Obituaries of other family members and unpublished mss, "Gosport Methodist Episcopal Church" by Mrs. Lucy Bracken in the collection of the Spencer, Owen County Library.

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time of his death, a notice in the Indianapolis Medical Journal credited him with a practice that carried him into Morgan, Monroe and Putnam Counties, in addition to serving patients in Owen County.¹⁹

Architecture

The house which Dr. Osgood built in Gosport was constructed in the popular I-House form, a type of folk Victorian mode whose origins could be traced to traditional British folk types, particularly common in the American south. The I-house form, two rooms wide and one-room deep, with a central hall and stair, when interpreted in the post-railroad era (as in the case of the Osgood House) was often chosen by the affluent local gentry, with elaborate additions of porches, chimneys and extensions.²⁰ The Osgood House exemplifies these qualities, and, because of the T-plan employed, combines the chaste symmetry of the I-house form with the more irregular form of the gabled ell. Regularity of fenestration is rigorously maintained (as on the west facade), yet interest is added by the projecting bay of the west side of the T and the ornate main entry, nestled in the west side of the porch. It may not be stretching the point too far to say that the house reflects the sober dignity of the owner's New England precedents as well as the post-railroad era exuberance of a river town, such as Gosport, on the (mid)western frontier.

The growth of the railroad system during the mid-nineteenth century made heavy woodworking machinery available to local crafts centers. Local lumberyards were provided with abundant supplies of pre-cut detailing from distant mills. The latter half of the nineteenth century in America saw an explosion of wood and metal-working machinery. Especially important for the construction industry was the development of the band saw, which ushered in an era of "American Carpenter Renaissance".²¹ The band saw had been patented in England by William Newberry as early as 1808, but it

¹⁹Blanchard, p. 898; Letters in the Collection of the Indiana Historical Society; Journal of the Indiana State Medical Association, Vol. 16, #4, April 15, 1913, pp. 170-171.

²⁰Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992, pp. 96-97.

²¹Mitchell Wilson, *American Science and Invention*, New York: Bonanza Books, 1960, p. 244.

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was not practical because a steel band which would run for a long time without snapping could not be produced. By 1849, these problems were surmounted and a successful band saw was re-invented by Lemuel Hedge in the United States.²² A decade later, when Gosport enjoyed railroad service, and the young Doctor Osgood married his sweetheart in the small town, high styled wood ornamentation, such as can be found on the Osgood House and others in the community, were available for those with affluent means and distinguished tastes.

The Osgood House displays features of the Italianate style. Many elements are indicative of this style and help define the house's ornamentation. Among those elements are the window treatments, with their subtly pedimented, hooded window tops, and the ornate, bracketed porch supports with their arched openings. Although not untypical of Italianate houses, the complex main entry composition, with its full side and upper lights, also recalls Gothic or Greek Revival houses. The Italianate style dominated American house construction between 1850 and 1880. It was especially popular in Indiana and other parts of the Midwest. Rural examples, like the Osgood House, typically followed the informal models of the Picturesque movement, more modest than the Italian Villa or Italianate town houses to be found in urban areas.²³

Other details which demonstrate the Italianate influence in the Osgood House include the delicate tracery which is used as in fill in the entrados of the porch arches and the openwork in the pendants which hang from the center of these arches. All of these motifs are typical of the style and were made possible by the advances in woodworking machinery of the time. The scrolled brackets on the porch are especially rich in detail of the Italianate model and greatly enhance the front facade. The Osgood House thus stands as an excellent example of the Italianate/I-house model in a modest rural town of the mid-to late nineteenth century and as such is architecturally significant on the local level.

²²Charles Singer, Ed., *A History of Technology, Vol IV*, New York/London: Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 437.

²³McAlester, pp. 212-214.

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Additional Notes:

The present owner of the house, Mrs. Mina Jane Ahlemeyer, and her late husband, have maintained the home's tradition of professional endeavors. Mr. Francis "Pat" Ahlemeyer was an educator for 44 years in Owen and Monroe Counties, serving first as a teacher in Gosport, Lapaz, Spencer and Bloomington and later as superintendent for Owen and Monroe County Schools. Mrs. Ahlemeyer earned the Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees at Indiana University, the latter degree in art education. She taught for 17 years in the public schools before retiring to pursue art and private teaching in her home. She presently uses the extension at the north wing of the house as an art studio.

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Other Sources:

Sanborn Maps in the collection of Indiana University Geography Library, Bloomington, Indiana

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Vertical Files, newspapers on microfilms, cemetery records and other information in the collection of the Spencer, Owen County Public Library.

Photographs, clippings, obituaries and other materials in the collection of the Fortnightly Club, Gosport, Indiana, courtesy of the curator, Sue Trotman.

Materials regarding Dr. Osgood's medical and Civil War careers, as well as newspapers of the region, courtesy of the Indiana State Library, with the assistance of John L. R. Selch of the Indiana Division, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dr. Osgood's correspondence as former assistant surgeon of the 5th Ind. Cavalry may be found in the collections of the Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The Abstract of the property, along with other photos and memorabilia in the collection of Mrs. Mina Jane Ahlemeyer.

Family obituaries and other information from the collection of Mr. Richard Dodd, Dr. Osgood's great-grandson.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property consists of Lots number one and two of Block 13 of the original plat of the town of Gosport, Indiana. This property is bounded on the south by North Street and on the east by Fourth Street. The northern boundary is the alley north of North Street, running in an east/west direction. The western boundary of the property is the former alley running in a north/south direction east of Fourth Street, now the property line between lots two and three of Block 13.

Boundary Justification

Lot number two has been associated with Dr. Osgood, his descendants, or the present owners since he purchased it in 1860, in 1863, he also purchased part of lot number one, although the northern part of this lot was owned by the First Baptist Church during this time. Thus, the bulk of the property can be related to the builders of the main house and remained in the hands of this family until it was purchased by the present owners in 1951. The northern half of Lot number one was purchased in 1962 by the Ahlemeyers from the trustees of the Baptist church. It is probable that the former church had been demolished at this time. Stones from the foundation remain at the site as a reminder. The present use of the property, including all of Lot 1 is residential, and remains in the Ahlemeyer family, thus arguing for its inclusion in the listing.

Contemporary Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs, unless otherwise noted.

1. Dr. H. G. Osgood House
2. Gosport, Owen County, Indiana
3. Photographer: Camille B. Fife, The Westerly Group, Inc.
4. June-July, 1998
5. Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 402 W. Washington St. Indianapolis, IN 46204.

EXTERIORS

6. View looking north, of the main (south) facade of the house.
7. Photo 1 of 21

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6. View looking northwest, showing the east corner of the house and the well.

7. Photo 2 of 21

6. View looking west from the east lawn, showing a corner of the modern garage addition, the outhouse and the carriage barn.

7. Photo 3 of 21

6. View looking south, from the northeast portion of the east lawn, toward the north elevation of the house. Shown is a portion of the modern garage addition, and the rear wing of the house with its six/over/six light windows and gabled dormers.

7. Photo 4 of 21

6. Close-up view of the privy, looking west from the east lawn.

7. Photo 5 of 21

6. View looking south from the alley at the north edge of the property showing the north side of the carriage barn.

7. Photo 6 of 21

6. View looking south, southeast from the west edge of the property, showing the board fence, the west side of the privy and the north side of the storage barn wing of the house.

7. Photo 7 of 21

6. View looking east from the adjacent property (west of the Osgood House), showing the entry to the rear wing, the studio/office, the chimney and roof line of the north wing of the house.

7. Photo 8 of 21

6. View looking northeast from North Street, showing the front facade and west elevations of the house.

7. Photo 9 of 21

6. Close-up view of the main entry on the south facade showing the surround and the porch scroll work.

7. Photo 10 of 21

INTERIORS

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6. Photograph taken from the entry hall on the first floor looking south toward the main entry, showing the interior surround of the entry and, at right, the stair and newel.

7. Photo 11 of 21

6. Image of main floor front parlor, looking toward the second (north) parlor, showing fireplace and two flat-arched openings with scroll work.

7. Photo 12 of 21

6. Photograph taken from the first floor looking east from the entry to the east bedroom, showing the fireplace and at left, the interior of the north window.

7. Photo 13 of 21

6. Photograph taken from the main entry, looking north toward the stair, showing the newel post and stair as well as the bathroom in fill which was installed in the porch area behind the stair well.

7. Photo 14 of 21

6. View looking east from the front parlor, through the front hall, showing the open main door, the door surround with transom leading to the front parlor and part of the main stair newel post. In the lower front foreground, part of one of the distinctive wood thresholds is visible.

7. Photo 15 of 21

6. View looking east, toward the north and east walls of the second floor, front, east bedroom. The door with tripartite light transom leads to a closet. The northeast window interior is also shown.

7. Photo 16 of 21

6. A photograph taken in the second floor, front west bedroom, looking south toward the two front windows.

7. Photo 17 of 21

6. Looking northwest, this view shows the second floor, north west bedroom (main front section of the house) and the door leading to the north section (oldest part of the house). The latter is slightly lower than the main section, requiring a step down.

7. Photo 18 of 21

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6. View taken in the oldest wing of the house, looking northwest toward the dormer window on the second floor. In the right center is the railing to a rear stair which leads down to the first floor in this wing.

7. Photo 19 of 21

6. Close-up view of one of the second floor doors (leading to the west front bedroom) showing the extensive graining and original hardware.

7. Photo 20 of 21

6. Extreme close-up of decorative moldings, including the baseboard and door surrounds. Photo taken on the second floor landing, looking toward the entry to the east bedroom.

7. Photo 21 of 21

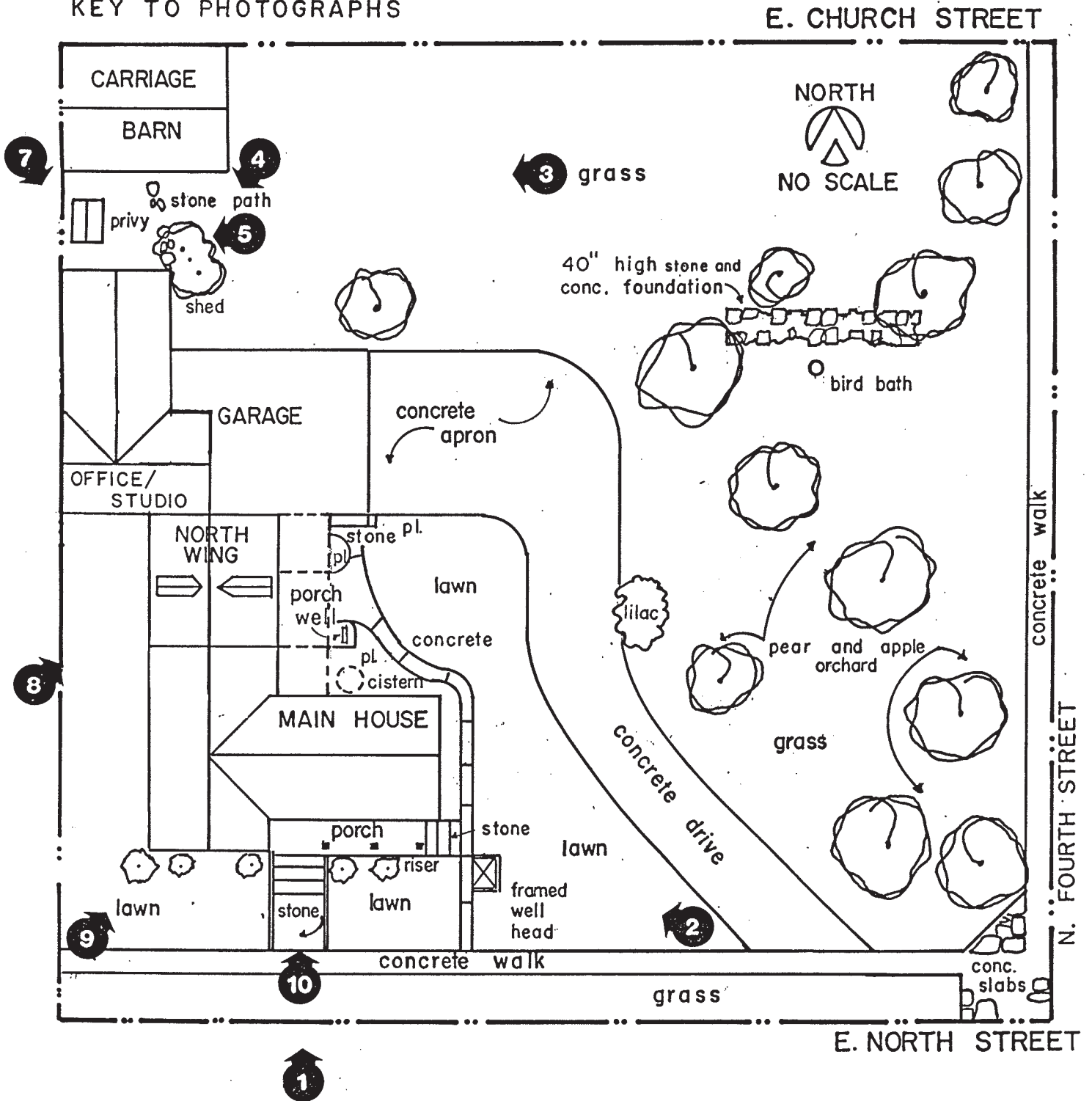
DR. H.G. OSGOOD HOUSE

GOSPORT, OWEN COUNTY, INDIANA

6

SITE - EXISTING CONDITIONS

KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS



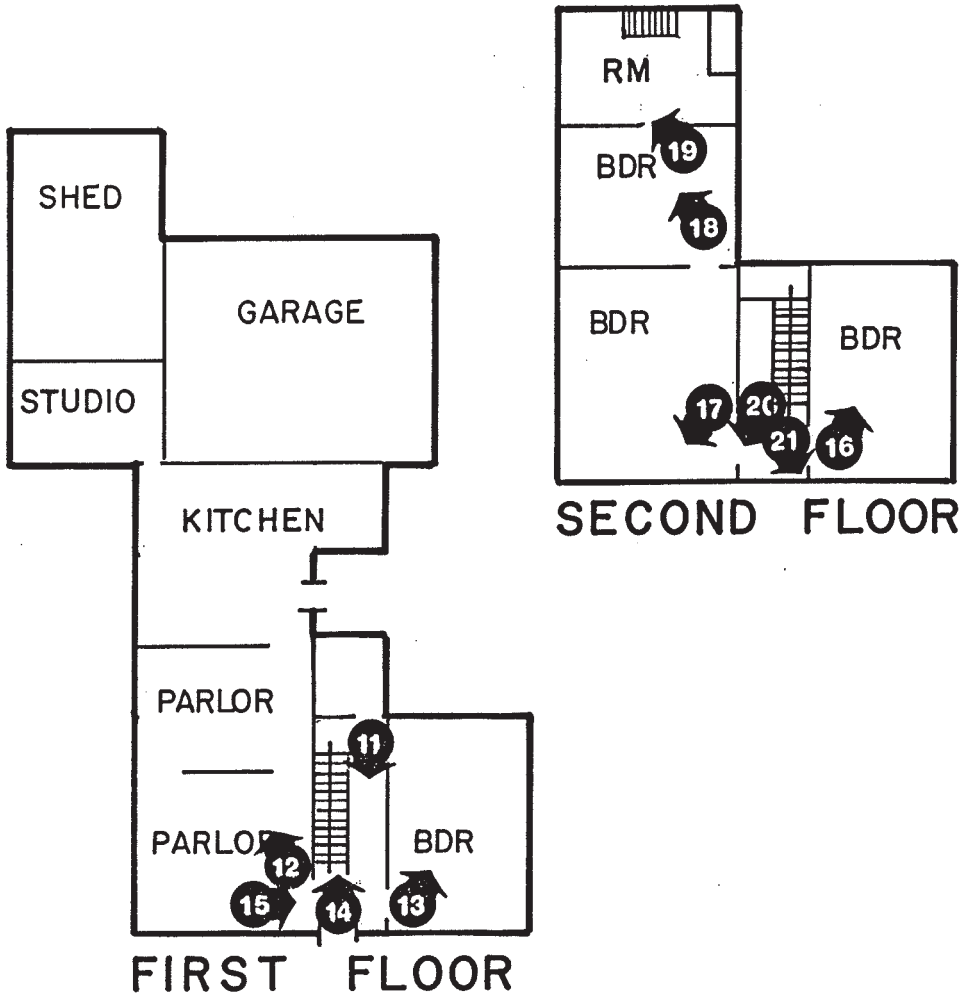
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NORTH



NO SCALE



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