

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (November 2005)

State Inventory No. 09-00832 New Supplemental
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 09-00621
 Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries
 National Register Status:(any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE
 9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number _____
 Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name Conner-Leitha House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 123 7th St NW

city or town Waverly vicinity, county Bremer

Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name _____ Township No. _____ Range No. _____ Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____

(If Urban) Subdivision Harmon & LeValley Addition Block(s) 62 Lot(s) Lot 1

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property	
	If Non-Eligible Property Enter number of:	If Eligible Property, enter number of: Contributing Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	_____ buildings	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____ sites	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____ structures	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ objects	_____ objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ Total	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).

Title Waverly's NW & SE Neighborhoods Historical & Architectural Survey Historical Architectural Data Base Number 09-028

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) **Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

01A Single Dwelling 01A Single Dwelling

01C05 Garage 01C05 Garage

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) **Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

09A02 Gable-Front and Wing (2-story) foundation 10 Concrete; 06 Stucco

07E02 Craftsman Style walls (visible material) 06 Stucco

_____ roof 08A Asphalt/Shingle

_____ other _____

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | A Property is associated with significant events. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history. |

County Bremer
City Waverly

Address 123 7th St NW

Site Number 09-00832
District Number 09-00621

Criteria Considerations

- 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)

02 ARCHITECTURE

Significant Dates

Construction date
1890 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates, including renovation
1918- house renovation; 1918 - garage

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect

Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc.
organization for City of Waverly, Historic Preservation Commission
street & number N3834 Deep Lake Road
city or town Sarona state WI date 9/2013
telephone 715/469-3300 zip code 54870

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____

- See continuation sheet or attached *photo & slide catalog sheet* for list of photo roll or slide entries.
- Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or noncontributing status)
- Barn:**
 - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: Yes No More Research Recommended
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: _____

Evaluated by (name/title): _____ Date: _____

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Conner-Leitha House	Bremer
Name of Property	County
123 7 th St NW	Waverly
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7. Description

This single-family house is estimated to have been built in 1903 according to Bremer County Assessor records. The house form and individual features represent construction during two periods including 1/1 double-hung windows from the 1880s or 1890s, and a porch and stucco changes from ca. 1917 during ownership by local designer and contractor, John F. Leitha. Property transfer records show the parcel was acquired by Jane Conner, a widow, in 1888 and transferred to Leitha in 1915. Newspaper accounts show Leitha selling the house post-renovation in Jan 1918 to Josephine and Charles Ford. A construction date of ca. 1890 for the original much smaller frame house and a renovation date of ca. 1917 are consistent with features and finishes of similarly dated houses in the neighborhood.

This 1 and 2-story Gable-Front-and-Wing house is an example of creative updating of a modest pre-1900 house with finishes and features that give it a Craftsman Style design by designer/contractor John F. Leitha. The Conner-Leitha House has a stucco finish on its earlier foundation – likely over stone on the central and north sections – and over its newer concrete block foundation on the south. The current walls of the entire house (original and addition) are clad in textured stucco. The complex roof has flared gabled sections on the main block and additional projections, all with moderately wide eaves. A very broad, low-pitched front-gable roofed porch fills the left-hand ell and extends in front of the new south addition, all added in ca. 1915-1917 by Leitha. The porch has wide eaves and no cornice boards. The porch detailing includes tall stucco-clad square pedestals at the outer corners and a shorted pedestal flanking one side of the entrance steps. Short square columns originally served as roof supports on the outer pedestals but a new taller one now has been added to the pedestal adjacent to the steps. The closed balustrade now is clad in square cut shingles though the original finish may have been stucco as well.

Fenestration throughout the house includes a mix of original and later window sash and openings. Original window units are the 2/2 double-hung units in the front-gable 2-story section at the north end of the house on both the front and rear facades. Elsewhere, windows likely installed during the ca. 1915-1917 renovation and enlargement of the house were paired or groups of three double-hung units with three lights in the upper sash and one in the lower sash, or simple 1/1 double-hung units. In all instances the new and old window openings have decorative geometric patterned window hoods added to tie all of the openings together. Entrance changes made with the ca. 1915-1917 renovation include the addition of a pair of 10-light French doors on the north façade and a new front entrance opening on the east façade consisting of a front door with three Craftsman Style vertical lights surrounded by sidelights and a two-light transom.

A detached single-bay garage with matching textured stucco cladding is located south of the house. It has a low-pitched front gable roof with gabled parapet ends and returning cornice moldings facing east. A single overhead door with wood and glass panels is a replacement element but the garage continues to retain its most significant character defining features. The building was constructed in 1918 according to Assessor records, about the same time that Leitha finished renovating the house for sale

Alterations: stucco cladding (ca. 1917); garage door (undated); windows and doors (ca. 1917); shingles on balustrade (pre-2009).

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8. Significance

The Conner-Leitha House at 123 7th St NW was built in ca. 1890 for Jane Conner as a smaller Front-Gabled Roof house form or Gable-Front-and-Wing house form. About 25 years later, it was renovated and expanded by Waverly designer and contractor, John Leitha, as a short-term personal residence while he completed an expansion and updates in the Craftsman Style. The house qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the historic district under Criterion C. The garage is considered a contributing resource as it was designed specifically to complement the house's updated Craftsman design and remains substantially intact.

Property transfer records show the parcel was acquired by Jane Conner, wife of James S. Conner, in 1888. The couple had married in 1862 and by 1899 resided here in the original smaller house with their two daughters, Emma and Ruth (Edna), both of whom were teachers. The 1899 city directory lists J.S. Conner as an agent, possibly a railroad agent. In 1904, John died and two years later, Jane Conner transferred the house to John F. Leitha in 1915. Leitha was employed as a contractor and self-trained architect at the time and became identified as Waverly's most important local architect in the early decades of the 20th century. He apparently acquired this house for purposes of renovation after selling his previous residence at 203 5th St NW that he and his wife May built and occupied from 1910 to 1915. He designed and built a number of single family houses in Waverly and a handful of commercial buildings listed below. A brief biography researched and prepared by Jan Olive Nash Full accompanies the list of commissions.

Newspaper accounts show Leitha selling the house post-renovation in Jan 1918 to Josephine and Charles Ford. They resold the house to Marion Knott two years later and she continued to reside here until selling the property to George Walker in 1937. He and his wife retained the house until selling it in 1943 to Herman and Ada Fritschel. In 1952 Herman Fritschel sold the property to Violet Osincup who held it until 1975 while residing here with her husband, Willard.

9. Sources

Atlas of Bremer County, Iowa. Waverly, Iowa: Waverly Publishing Company, 1917.

Atlases of Bremer County. Microfilm copies of atlases for 1875, 1894 and 1927, Waverly Public Library.

Bremer County History Book Committee. *Bremer County History, 1985.* Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing, 1985.

Bremer County Assessor's Office, property records.

Bremer County Auditor's Office, property transfer records.

Full, Jan Olive Nash, Tall Grass Historians. "Biography of *Architect John F. Leitha (1880-1937)*" and email interview, 3/11/2012.

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Grawe, Joseph F. *History of Bremer County, Iowa, Volumes I and II*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Company, 1914.

History of Butler and Bremer Counties, Iowa. Springfield, Illinois: Union Publishing, 1883.

Sanborn Company Maps. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1885, 1892, 1897, 1905, 1915, 1927, and 1927 updated to 1943.

Vertical file collection, Waverly Public Library.

Waverly building histories, miscellaneous bound volumes in reference collection, Waverly Public Library.

Waverly Business News Index (database), Waverly Public Library.

Waverly city directories, 1899 and 1913; 1961.

Waverly Heritage Days historical walking tour brochures for 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000.

Waverly Historic Photo Collection, Waverly Public Library.

Waverly newspapers.

Waverly telephone directories, 1939-1954.

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Biography of Architect John F. Leitha (1880-1937)

prepared by Jan Olive Nash Full, Tall Grass Historians (email interview, 3/11/2012)

John F. Leitha was born near Vienna, Austria, in 1880, and the following year immigrated with his family to the United States. Details of his family and early life remain unknown, but a 1924 passport application reveals that from 1881 to 1909, when he was from age 1 to 29, Leitha annually traveled between Oklahoma and Waverly, Iowa, living half the year in each location.¹ The census of 1900 shows Leitha in Waverly, boarding in the home of Christopher Arns, a German immigrant and house carpenter. Just 19 years old, Leitha was described as a house carpenter, as well, and perhaps was Arns' apprentice. In 1905, the State Census taker found Leitha still living in Waverly, but now with his wife May (also spelled Mae), and daughter Lucille. In 1907, Leitha received what was perhaps his first big construction project. He was hired to build the parsonage (extant) for St. Peter's Evangelical Church in Tripoli, a small town approximately 16 miles northeast of Waverly.² Leitha's parsonage was a commodious two-story Queen Anne house (free classic variation), with a two-story front bay.³ This was a vernacular house of a design commonly seen in and around Waverly and surrounding communities. Dozens if not hundreds of similar houses still stand in Waterloo, Iowa, a much larger city a few miles to the south.

In 1911, Leitha joined with another Waverly builder, Leo Stenzell, to construct the two-story brick Waverly City Hall (nonextant), which also served as fire station and jail. The Stenzell and Leitha team also was the contractor for a two-story brick storefront on the east side of Waverly's business district in 1913. By at least 1912, however, Leitha also was referring to himself as an architect and was designing larger buildings for some of Waverly's institutions. His design work included a new boys' dormitory and teachers' residence at the Iowa Lutheran Children's Home in 1912; a large addition to the Sisters of Mercy Hospital in 1913; and also in 1913 a dormitory building (extant) at Wartburg Seminary and Teachers' Academy, now known as Wartburg College (see Table below).⁴

In 1914 Leitha designed the Waverly Savings Bank in the classical style popular for banks in Iowa at the time. Built on the business district's main intersection on a prime corner lot, the brick and glazed terra cotta bank is a "temple of finance" with an inset main entrance flanked by Ionic columns holding up a bold entablature, though capped by only a modest pediment. The next year, 1915, Leitha was hired to design a large addition to the Sumner High School built in 1901. Leitha's two-story addition to the Sumner High School may have sparked his interest in progressive school architectural theories as he designed his addition, as well as in modern school room and equipment requirements.⁵

As both architect and superintendent of construction for the new Washington School in Osage, Leitha was in control of most aspects of the project and he appears to have moved semi-permanently to

¹ John F. Leitha, Passport Application, August 29, 1924. Accessed at www.ancestry.com on October 17, 2011.

² *Waterloo Daily Courier*, November 12, 1907.

³ U.S. Population Census, 1900; Iowa Census, 1905; U.S. Population Census, 1910.

⁴ *Sumner Gazette*, October 19, 1911; *Sumner Gazette*, July 25, 1912; *American Art and Architecture* 103 (June 18, 1913): 10; *American Art and Architecture* 103 (March 5, 1913): 10; *Waverly, Rich in History: A Photo History* (Marceline, MO: Heritage House Publishing, 1996), 32.

⁵ *History of the Buildings in the Main Street Area of Waverly, Iowa - West Side.* Vol. 1. Information compiled in part for *Main Street-Waverly survey, 1990. Waverly Public Library Collection, Waverly, Iowa*; "Two School Districts Were Here When Town Started," *Sumner Gazette*, June 29, 1972.

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Osage. After the contracts were let in August 1916, his wife Mae and daughter Lucille (*aka* Lucy) joined him, as the construction of the school would “keep him in that city for some time,”⁶ and the Leithas soon made Osage their new home.⁷ An advertisement from the 1916 *Iowa State Gazetteer*, published on the eve of the school’s construction, lists Leitha’s office in Waverly but suggests the architect was anticipating considerable success with his Washington School project. The ad announces the services of “J.F. Leitha, Architect AND Personal Superintending of all Classes of Buildings,” and features Leitha’s rendering of the Washington School about to be built in Osage.⁸

Washington School represents a peak in the career of John F. Leitha, but perhaps not the only one. Following the Osage school commission in 1916, Leitha’s commissions no doubt slowed during the construction hiatus of World War I. Service in the military certainly had an effect on his professional career also. Leitha’s 1918 draft record indicates he was in the service at that time, working as a carpenter at Camp Dodge near Des Moines. That draft card describes the 38-year-old Leitha as of medium height and “stout” build, with gray eyes and dark hair. By 1920, Leitha was once again self-describing as an architect.⁹ In that year, 1920, he joined with another architect, Louis Rust, to open an office in Dubuque, Iowa, the river port city on the Mississippi River. Leitha and Rust worked together for almost two years, first remodeling the Dubuque High School and then drawing plans for the Dubuque Coliseum.¹⁰ After the partnership ended, Leitha continued to practice in Dubuque for two more years. In 1924, he applied for a passport indicating he would stay two months in Spain and France doing “architectural work.” While this is not specific, Europe had been at war and was still rebuilding. In late 1927, Leitha moved to Freeport, Illinois, perhaps prompted by the Iowa architectural registration law that went into effect the same year. Newspaper ads and short notices suggest Leitha focused on residential building in Freeport. The same newspaper notices refer to him as an architect; however, in Leitha’s own ads he was careful to only claim to be a designer. The state of Illinois also had a registration requirement that had been in effect since at least the 1890s and it is likely Leitha would have used the title of architect if he had been able to register with the state. Personal problems and the Great Depression appear to have taken a toll on both Leitha’s career and his health. After moving to Boscobel, Wisconsin, to supervise work on a Catholic school building, he died suddenly at age 57 in 1937.¹¹

⁶ *Waterloo Evening Courier*, August 17, 1916.

⁷ *Waterloo Evening Courier*, April 14, 1919.

⁸ Gazetteer clipping contained in the John Leitha architect file, Iowa State Historic Preservation Office, Des Moines, Iowa.

⁹ U.S. Population Census, 1920.

¹⁰ *The Bridgemen Magazine* 20/8 (August 1920): 428; *The American Contractor* 41 (September 4, 1920): 42. Rust designed, for example, the Waverly Community Building/Palace Theatre in 1925. See “History of the Buildings in the Main Street Area of Waverly, Iowa - West Side.” Vol. 1. Information compiled in part for Main Street–Waverly survey, 1990. Waverly Public Library Collection, Waverly, Iowa; U.S. Population Census, 1920.

¹¹ Wesley I. Shank, *Iowa’s Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 1; “Dubuque, IA. Apt. Bldg.,” *The American Contractor* 41 (December 25, 1920): 63; “Hazel Green to Have Town Hall,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 26, 1923; *Freeport [IL] Journal-Standard*, November 17, 1927; February 9, 1929; April 10, 1929; March 5, 1930; and September 11, 1937.

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Partial List of Buildings by Architect John F. Leitha¹²

NAME OF BUILDING	LOCATION	YEAR	LEITHA'S ROLE	STATUS
Parsonage, St. Peter's Evangelical Church (a.k.a. Faith United Church of Christ)	408 S. Main St Tripoli, IA	1907	Leitha, architect	Extant
City Hall, Fire Station, and Jail	First Street NE Waverly, IA	1911	Leitha & Stenzell, builders	Nonextant
Boys' Dormitory and Teachers' Residence, Iowa Lutheran Orphans' Home	Waverly, IA	1912	Leitha, architect Stenzell & Leitha, builders	Unknown
Sisters of Mercy Hospital addition	Waverly, IA	1913	Leitha, architect	Nonextant
Dormitory, Wartburg Seminary and Teachers' Academy	Waverly, IA	1913	Leitha, architect	Extant
Waverly Savings Bank	100 E. Bremer Ave Waverly, IA	1914	Leitha, architect	Extant
Sumner High School addition	Sumner, IA	1915	Leitha, architect	Prob. Nonextant
Washington School	314 S. 7th Street Osage, IA	1916	Leitha, architect and construction superintendent	Extant
Dubuque High School remodel	Dubuque, IA	1920-23	Leitha & Rust, architects (office in Dubuque)	Extant
Cooper Apartment Building	Dubuque, IA	1920	Leitha & Rust, architects	Unknown
Dubuque Coliseum	Dubuque, IA	1921	Leitha & Rust, architects	Unknown
Hazel Green Municipal Hall	Hazel Green, WI	1923	Leitha, architect (office in Dubuque)	Nonextant
Billerbeck Garage	Freeport, IL	1929	Leitha, architect (office in Freeport)	Unknown

¹² Jan Olive Full's research table and sources: *Waterloo Daily Courier*, 11/12/1907; *Sumner Gazette*, 10/19/1911; *Sumner Gazette*, 7/25/1912; *American Art and Architecture* 103 (June 18, 1913): 10; *American Art and Architecture* 103 (March 5, 1913): 10; "History of the Buildings in the Main Street Area of Waverly, Iowa – East Side." Vol. 2. Information compiled in part for Main Street–Waverly survey, 1990. Waverly Public Library Collection, Waverly, Iowa; *Sumner Gazette*, 9/2/1915, reprinted 6/29/1972; *Electrical World* 68/1 (July 1, 1916): 53; *Waterloo Evening Courier*, 8/17/1916; *The Bridgemen Magazine* 20/8 (August 1920): 428; *The American Contractor* 41 (December 25, 1920): 63; *Engineering News-Record* 87/12 (September 22, 1921): 143; *Wisconsin [Madison] State Journal*, 12/26/1923; *Freeport Journal-Standard*, 4/10/1929.

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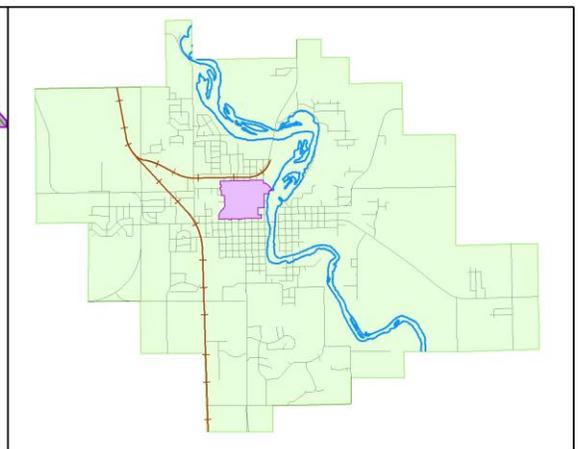
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Site Map: Bremer County GIS Department, 12/2011.

**123 7th St NW
PIN 09-03-244-004**



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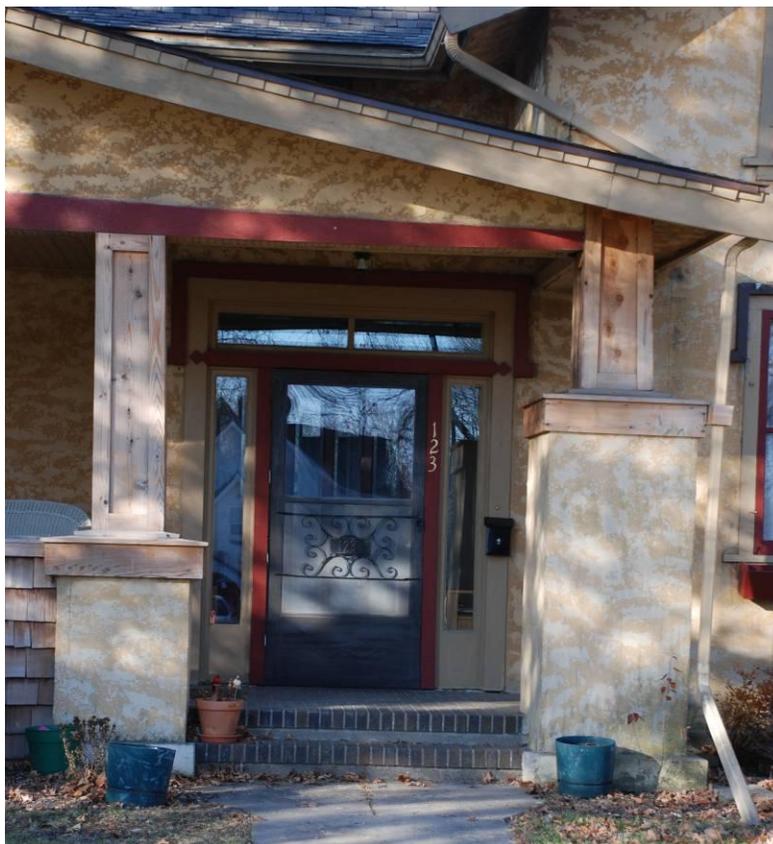
123 7th St NW

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Photographs: 123 7th St NW, looking west and entrance detail, looking west, Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc., photographer, 11/15/2011.



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Photographs: 123 7th St NW, looking west and entrance detail, looking west, Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc., photographer, 11/15/2011.

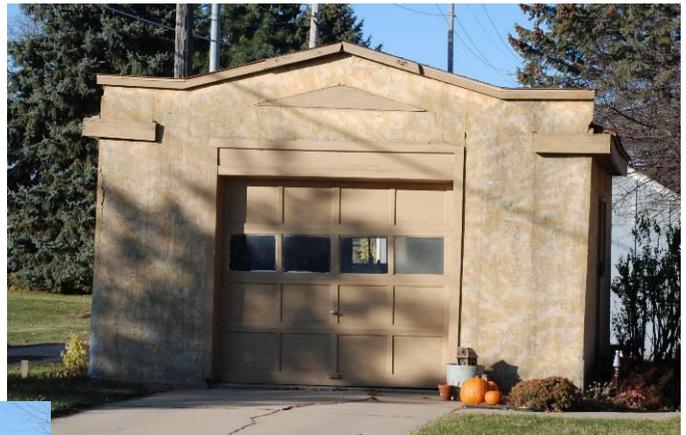
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Photographs: 123 7th St NW, looking southwest; garage, looking west and northwest, Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc., photographer, 11/15/2011.



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Photographs: 123 7th St NW, looking southwest and northwest, Justine Zimmer, IHSEMD, photographer, 4/24/2009.



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Photographs: 123 7th St NW, south addition, looking northwest and front façade, looking west, Justine Zimmer, IHSEMD, photographer, 4/24/2009.



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Photographs: 123 7th St NW, looking southwest and southeast, Justine Zimmer, IHSEMD, photographer, 4/24/2009.



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Photographs: 123 7th St NW, winter scene, looking west and garage, looking southwest, Justine Zimmer, IHSEMD, photographer, 1/23/2009.



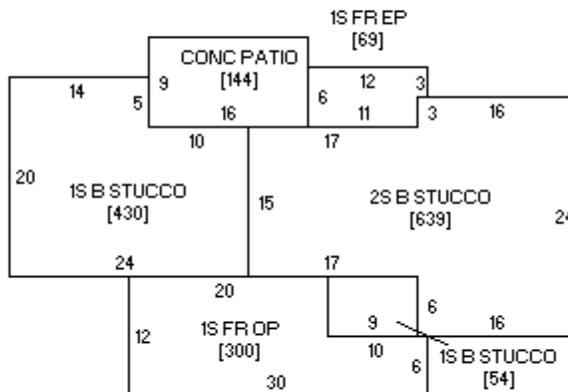
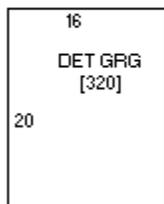
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Floor plan, 123 7th St NW, Bremer County Assessor website; available at <http://beacon.schneidercorp.com/PhotoEngine/Sketch.aspx?appid=330&keyvalue=0903244004&index=0&size=0>; accessed 6/24/2013.



Sketch by www.camavision.com