

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

WASHINGTON

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

1. Name

historic THE WEIR HOUSE

and/or common MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

2. Location

street & number 715 N. Main St.

not for publication

city, town Edwardsville vicinity of

state Illinois code 012 county Madison code 119

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Madison County Historical Society, Inc.

street & number 715 N. Main St.

city, town Edwardsville vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds -
Madison County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Edwardsville state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Sites Inventory for the Metropolitan Area
title East-West Gateway Coordinating Council has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Madison County Historical Museum

city, town Edwardsville state Illinois

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date 1836
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The original house is a two and a half story rectangular structure of early Federal style built in 1836, with solid brick walls of local manufacture. The beams and trusses are of oak, fastened with pegs. The structure is 42 1/2 feet wide and 36 1/3 feet deep. Five windows up and four windows down (each with 6 lights over 6) pierce the East facade, with an inset door opening onto a central hallway. The door's fan light and arched lintel are of particular beauty, perfecting the entrance's classic proportions.

Inside, the seven-foot-wide hall stretches front to back in the Southern manner and contains the staircase. Four square rooms open off the downstairs hallway, and four matching ones open off the upstairs hallway. The two downstairs parlors on the South side and the two on the North side are connected by eight-foot arched openings, whereas upstairs bedrooms are separate. Each of the eight rooms has a fireplace served by chimneys built flush with the North and South walls and extending above the roof line in parapets. Because the South wall abuts the 1836 property line, some speculate that the builder was contemplating an adjoining structure on his lot to the South, but no evidence of that exists. The original kitchen (long since pulled down) was detached, and a 12 foot deep verandah (now shortened) ran across the West (back) side. The original roof was of wood shakes, now gone. All sills and lintels remain, and some original shutters (others were re-made).

Three dormers pierce both the East and the West roof lines, providing light and ventilation to the two attic rooms and hall. These dormers are presently 6 feet wide, sheathed in aluminum siding. The originals were approximately 4 feet wide. (A 1976 recommendation for restoration called for the return to original size and materials.) A particularly interesting original brick cornice is visible on the West face, but is obscured by modern guttering on the East. A single window was cut into the South side, perhaps in the 1860's; and a door was built in originally or added soon after 1836 to serve the doctor's office on the North side, by the Northeast corner.

Inside, the floors are of random-width white pine boards, (covered, in the Northern rooms, by oak strips in the 20th century). The staircase from ground floor to second is machined mahogany, whereas that from second floor to attic is hand carved, of pine. The lower staircase and the wood work throughout the first floor are thought to have been installed in the 1890's, displaying details such as reeding and bulls-eye corners typical of that era. Some original mantle pieces remain in the house; other mantle pieces of mid-19th century vintage have been installed from other local structures.

The West (back) of the structure has suffered various additions to its Northern half beginning as early as 1860. The present annex of frame construction, two stories high, was put on in 1929, when considerable remodeling was done to accommodate apartments. Although the apartments were removed and the floor plan restored to the original house in 1963, the annex remains. It is inconspicuous from the street, and a useful space for modern conveniences.

Weir House today is conscientiously maintained by the County Historical Society as the second oldest brick structure in Edwardsville, and as a stately example of the town's fathers' taste and craft.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1836 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Weir House, built in 1836, is the second oldest house in Edwardsville. The oldest house is the Stephenson House built in 1820 and listed on the National Register in 1980. Both houses are Federal style, but each is uniquely different. Although both two and a half story brick houses are within the city limits of Edwardsville today, in the 1830s the Stephenson House was located on a 182 acre estate to the south of Edwardsville. It was the Weir Houses's country cousin. The architecture of the Stephenson House is simple compared to that of the Weir House which is a town house built from "Philadelphia row house" plans brought to Edwardsville from the East Coast by Dr. John Weir in 1836.¹

Although there were many Federal style houses in Edwardsville at one time, they began to disappear after World War II when they were torn down to make way for parking lots and modern homes. Today there are only a few left and they are altered beyond recognition with the exception of the Stephenson House, the Weir House, and the Berleman House, a brick one-story Federal style workingman's house built in the 1860s and listed on the National Register.

When Dr. Weir built his brick home only a few blocks from the original county court house in Edwardsville, he placed it on a corner lot, one of three adjacent lots he had purchased on Main Street. Because the South wall abuts the 1836 property line, some speculate that Dr. Weir intended to build row houses on the two adjacent lots, but none were built, perhaps a result of the Panic of 1837 and the severe depression that followed.

The South and North wall of the Weir House are parapeted double chimney walls, while the Stephenson House has only one chimney on each end wall. This is probably due to the fact that the Weir house is two rooms deep, and the Stephenson House is one room deep. There is a fireplace in each room of the Weir House resulting in the need for double chimneys. The South wall that would have been a common wall connecting the Weir House to an adjacent house, remained a solid wall until the 1860s when Mrs. Weir had a window cut out so that she could look across the empty lots that were used as a pasture. It remains the only window in that wall today.

It appears that Dr. Weir decided to build his house on a corner lot so he could have a door to his office accessible from the side street on the North side of the house, eliminating the need for his patients to use the family entrance on the facade facing Main Street. It was in this office that he treated his patients and wrote many articles for medical journals published at that time.

The Stephenson House and the Weir House have similar facades. Both have five shuttered windows up and four down with an inset door at the center that opens into a central hall stretching front to back, but that is where the similarity ends. The Weir House has three dormers piercing the roof line on both sides of the house, and there is a basement under the Weir House. The windowed basement with its hand hewn beamed ceiling raises the elevation of the house thereby necessitating the use of a

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Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8. Page 2.

raised stone stoop at the front and side entrances to the house. Another important feature of the Weir House is its elegant entrance with elliptical fan light and side-lights and attenuated columns between the door and windows, all of which perfects the entrance's classic proportions and adds to the beauty of form arising from balanced proportions.

A veranda once stretched across the rear wall of the Weir House. When the detached kitchen was removed, a part of the veranda was removed to make way for an attached kitchen. Like the Stephenson House, the addition of the kitchen gave the house its ell shaped floor plan. Later, as the needs of the family changed, a two story addition took the place of the one story kitchen.

Dr. Edward H. Weir, the son of Dr. John, practiced medicine with his father until Dr. John's death in 1878, at which time Dr. Edward moved his office into a building near the court house, thus making more room in the house for his wife and five children. At the time of Dr. John's death, Major William Russell Prickett whose ancestors were very early settlers in Madison County, said this of Dr. John:

He was just a magnificent old time physician...it used to be said of him that he thought no man ever got closer to the actual soul of his fellow men than did the doctor.²

The house was used by three generations of the Weir family before it was sold in 1963 to the Madison County Historical Society, Inc., for use as its museum. One appropriate exhibit is a piano that belonged to Elijah P. Lovejoy. After Lovejoy's untimely death, Dr. Weir, who was a staunch Whig, became an avid Abolitionist. The Weir House today houses 170 years of Madison County history. Like its builder who brought the plans with him when he migrated to the western frontier, the Weir House served to help establish the frontier, and like its builder, Dr. Weir, it served the people well.

¹Norma C. Rathert, "Madison County Historical Museum," p. 2, May 25, 1970.

²Edwardsville Intelligencer Centennial Edition 1912, Major W. R. Prickett Discourses on Early Days, p. 165.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Madison County Historical Museum library files.
Records at Madison County Courthouse, Recorder of Deeds and Probate offices.
Open Space and Historic Site Preservation Study, Madison, St. Clair, Monroe, Randolph Co. Illinois. Southwestern Illinois Metro Area Planning Commission, February, 1973.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property LESS THAN 1

Quadrangle name EDWARDSVILLE, IL

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

116	242840	4300380
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

715 N. Main St. at the S.W. corner of W. F St., Lot 108 and 107, excepting 38' off the Southerly side of Lot 107 conveyed to Henry F. Weidey by deed dated July 31, 1884.

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

The Rev. Stephen E. Weissman
name/title Pauline Meyer, Edw. Preservation Commission

Cindi Longwisch, Asst. Librarian
Irene Mindrup, Past President, Madison
Co. Historical Society

organization Madison County Historical Society

date January 5, 1983

street & number 715 N. Main St.

telephone (618) 656-7562

city or town Edwardsville

state IL 62025

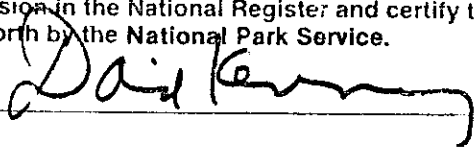
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



title

Director

date 3/21/83

For NPS use only

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

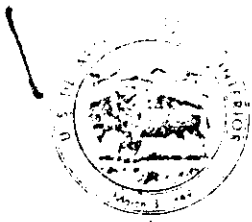
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

MAY 16 1983

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places during the week beginning May 8, 1983 and ending May 14, 1983. For further information call (202) 272-3504.

State, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (date listed)

- COLORADO, Delta County, Austin vicinity, Ferganchick Orchard Rock Art Site, (05/09/83)
COLORADO, Denver County, Denver, McCourt, Peter, House, 1471 High St. (05/09/83)
COLORADO, Jefferson County, Arvada, Russell-Graves House, 5605 Yukon St. (05/09/83)
COLORADO, Otero County, LaJunta, Rourke, Eugene, House, 619 Carson St. (05/09/83)
COLORADO, Routt County, Oak Creek vicinity, Foidel Canyon School, NW of Oak Creek (05/09/83)
- FLORIDA, Escambia County, Pensacola, North Hill Preservation District, Roughly bounded by Blount, Palafox, Wright, Belmont, Reus, and DeVilliers Sts. (05/09/83)
FLORIDA, Manatee County, Bradenton, Braden Castle Park Historic District, Roughly bounded by the Manatee and Braden Rivers, Ponce DeLeon St. and Pelot Ave. (05/09/83)
- GEORGIA, Fulton County, Atlanta, Butler Street Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, 23 Butler St., SE. (05/09/83)
- ILLINOIS, Bureau County, Princeton, Greenwood Cottage, 543 E. Peru St. (05/09/83)
ILLINOIS, Champaign County, Champaign, Vriner's Confectionery, 55 Main St. (05/09/83)
ILLINOIS, Clay County, Flora, Shriver House, 117 E. 3rd St. (05/09/83)
ILLINOIS, Cook County, Cicero, Morton, J. Sterling, High School East Auditorium, 2423 S. Austin Blvd. (05/09/83)
ILLINOIS, Madison County, Edwardsville, St. Louis Street Historic District, 603--1306 St. Louis St. (some exclusions) (05/09/83)
ILLINOIS, Madison County, Edwardsville, Weir, John, House, 715 N. Main St. (05/09/83)
ILLINOIS, Madison County, Keithsburg, Commercial House, 4th and Main St. (05/09/83)
ILLINOIS, Madison County, Belleville vicinity, Knobeloch-Seibert Farm, Off IL 177 (05/09/83)
- INDIANA, Cass County, Jeffersonville, Grisamore House, 111--113 W. Chestnut St. (05/09/83)
INDIANA, Fulton County, New Albany, Mansion Row Historic District, Main St. between State and 15th Sts. and Main St. between 7th and 11th Sts. (05/09/83)
INDIANA, Marion County, Indianapolis, Byram-Middleton House, 1828 N. Illinois St. (05/09/83)
INDIANA, Marion County, Indianapolis, Marott's Shoes Building, 18--20 E. Washington St. (05/09/83)
- KANSAS, Labette County, Chetopa vicinity, Harmon Site, (05/09/83)
- KENTUCKY, Mason County, Mays Lick vicinity, Fox Farm, (05/09/83)
- MAINE, Somerset County, North Anson, Temples Historic District, Madison Ave. (05/12/83)
- MARYLAND, Baltimore (Independent City), Eutaw-Madison Apartment House Historic District, 2502 and 2525 Eutaw Pl., and 2601 Madison Ave. (05/12/83)
MARYLAND, Baltimore County, Glencoe, Glencoe, 1314 Glencoe Rd. (05/09/83)
MARYLAND, Queen Annes County, Stevensville, Cray House, Cockey's Lane (05/09/83)
- MICHIGAN, Ottawa County, Holland, Holland Historic District, 11th, 12th, 13th Sts., and Washington, Maple, and Pine Aves. (05/12/83)