

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (December 1, 1999)

State Inventory No. 70-00530 New Supplemental
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) _____
 Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries
 National Register Status: (any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE
 Review & Compliance No. _____
 Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name Peter Musser House
 other names/site number Field Site #: FS-117

2. Location

street & number 501 East Mississippi Drive
 city or town Muscatine vicinity, county Muscatine
 Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name _____ Township No. _____ Range No. _____ Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) 16 Lot(s) 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 | If Eligible Property, enter number of: |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Enter number of: | Contributing Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | _____ buildings | <u>1</u> _____ buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | _____ sites | _____ sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | _____ structures | _____ structures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | _____ objects | _____ objects |
| | _____ Total | <u>1</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 _____ Historical Architectural Data Base Number _____

Historical and Architectural Survey and Evaluation of the Downtown Commercial District 70-013

6. Function or Use

| | |
|--|---|
| Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) | Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) |
| <u>01A01: Domestic / Residence</u> | <u>01B02: Domestic / Apartments</u> |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

7. Description

| | |
|--|---|
| Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) | Materials (Enter categories from instructions) |
| <u>05B: Late Victorian / Italianate</u> | foundation <u>03: Brick</u> |
| _____ | walls <u>03: Brick</u> |
| _____ | roof <u>15C: Rubber (simulates slate)</u> |
| _____ | 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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 type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | D | Property yields significant information in archaeology or history. |

County Muscatine Address 501 E. Mississippi Dr Site Number 70-00530
City Muscatine District Number _____

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 1874 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates _____

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)
Peter Musser

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 Jim Rudisill, City of Muscatine (R.L. McCarley, Consultant)

organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date July 20, 2005

street & number 215 Sycamore Street telephone 563-264-1550

city or town Muscatine state Iowa zip code 52761

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 non-contributing 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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| <u>Peter Musser House</u> | <u>Muscatine</u> |
| Name of Property | County |
| <u>501 E. Mississippi Dr.</u> | <u>Muscatine</u> |
| Address | City |

The Peter Musser House was recently surveyed by Robert C. Vogel & Associates in September 2003 for the Rock Island District, Army Corp of Engineers, as part of a Review and Compliance (Section 106) project. It was recommended that the house be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C. This recommendation was concurred with by the State Historic Preservation Office of Iowa in February 2004. Extensive research and documentation was compiled on this property at this time, which is on file with the State Historic Preservation Office of Iowa in Des Moines. Due to this recent work, little additional work was undertaken through this downtown survey project in 2004-05. The information below includes a summary of information on the 2003 survey form and some additional information, with notes of any recent changes to the property.

7. Narrative Description

The Peter Musser House is a two-story, brick, Italianate villa, a mansard roof, and a one-story rear addition. It exhibits several characteristic features of the Italianate style, including tall narrow two-over-two-light double-hung windows, wide eaves, brackets and dentils, and small attic windows. The front porch has typical Italianate columns with slight arch detailing extending between the columns. It appears that the house was originally a five-bay, double-pile house, with a two-story rear section on the east side of the rear with a rear one-story addition behind this section. A small bay window on the right (east) side of the façade is indicated on the 1883 and 1888 Sanborn maps. Between the 1892 and 1899 Sanborn maps, the current angled two-story bay with a mansard roof was added to this section of the façade, and a similar bay window was added to the south side of the west elevation. The porch was also modified at this time to the current layout. The two-story rear section has the same detailing as the main portion of the house, as well as the one-story rear addition. A second porch faces Mulberry Avenue along the west side of this rear section. The interior has been divided into twelve apartments. The 1928 Sanborn map continues to indicate a dwelling here, while the 1946 Sanborn map indicates apartments. They have been remodeled several time since this period. A significant limestone retaining wall extends along the front of the property, continuing in front of 505 E. Mississippi Drive.

There have been a number of changes made to the property since the 2003 survey. The current owner reported these changes are associated with a continuing renovation and restoration of the property. Recent work includes a replacement of the roof with a rubberized product made of recycled tires and designed to simulate slate tile, which is assumed to have been the original roofing material. In association with the roof replacement, all the Yankee gutters were also replaced with new, similar copper gutters. This work was completed in 2003. Work completed in 2004-2005 included installation of three new electrical services, rehabilitation of one bathroom and kitchen with either repair of existing fixtures or replacement with period pieces; complete gutting and replacement of two bathrooms and a laundry room with period appliances; and initiation of window restoration work. In addition, in 2005, the current owners installed new footings under a back porch, replaced several load-bearing beams and reinforced support columns. The owners estimate they have spent over \$100,000 towards these repairs over the last two to three years (Lesnet 2005).

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

According to the 2003 survey form: "The Peter Musser House is locally significant under Criterion C as a notable, well preserved specimen of the late Victorian period, Italianate style domestic architecture in Muscatine. It is also significant under Criterion B for its association with the important Muscatine businessman and community leader Peter Musser, for whom the house was built around 1874. The property also reflects the broad pattern of mid-nineteenth century residential development in Muscatine and therefore qualifies under Criterion A for associative value. Historic integrity is good, though home historic character has been lost as a result of street improvements and changing land uses on adjacent parcels. The reconstructed stone retaining walls are a distinctive feature of the property and contribute to its historic appearance. The side yard patio and its wooden fence are appropriately scaled and provide a minimum intrusion on the historic character of the house."

Previous work has misidentified the house as the Judge William Woodward House built in 1848. The 1875 birds-eye view of Muscatine depicts this house as a Greek Revival type house, with a two-story portico. Archeological investigations in 2003 suggested that the old house was a brick structure. Woodward owned this property, and the earlier house, until his death in 1874.

Peter Musser bought the property from the Woodward estate on August 25, 1874. Presumably, he soon built the existing house. The existing configuration is seen on the 1883 Sanborn map. Peter Charles Musser was born in 1826 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. In October 1854, he immigrated to Iowa, locating in Iowa City. The following year in company with his brother Richard and Edward Hoch, he opened a lumber-yard at Muscatine, under the firm name of Hoch & Musser. One year later the firm established a branch yard at Iowa City, of which Mr. Musser had the management until April 1864, when he went to California, engaged in mining, and returned to Iowa in the fall for his family. He mined for four year, returning with his family to Iowa in October 1869. In 1870 Mr. Musser joined his brother Richard, his nephew, P. M. Musser, and C. R. Fox, in the organization of the lumber firm of Musser & Co. In 1871, Musser & Company built a new sawmill on Muscatine island, further south from the Hershey mill. This section of the island boomed as new workers built houses near the mill, creating an area that soon became known as Musserville. Peter M. returned to Muscatine in 1873 to manage his uncles' business, buying Richard's interest. At this time, the name changed to P. M. Musser & Company. When Richard Musser once more took an interest in the business in 1876, the firm name finally became Musser & Company. Also in 1876, Peter M. Musser also became a part of the banking firm of Cook, Musser & Co. Both Richard and Peter remained associated with the lumber company until their deaths in 1896 and 1910 (Richman 1911, Vol. 1: 461; Richman 1911, Vol. 2: 159; *History of Muscatine County* 1879: 613; Walton 1899: 200).

It was during this period of growth at Musser & Company that Peter Musser bought this property and built the existing house. The 1900 census indicates that Peter was a 72-year-old widow living here with his 22-year-old daughter Laura. Their household included three German servants. Peter Musser is listed at 501 E. Mississippi Drive until his death in September 1910. Musser was still listed at this address in the 1908 directory, but not the 1911 directory.

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Frank Maurath was the new owner identified in the 1911 directory. Maurath was already listed as being retired at the time he moved into the house, but he continued to be listed there through the 1940-41 directory. Mrs. Mary Dermedy was listed there in the 1943 directory, followed by Leo Grosjean and Arthur Bancraft were both listed there in 1946. Grosjean is specifically identified as the new owner in the 1949 city directory, although Bancraft continues to live there. In the 1952 directory, three separate apartments are listed for the property. This is the first time apartments are mentioned, and indicates the probable date the building was renovated into multi-family housing. Grosjean, who operated the Home Oil Company next door at 111 Mulberry, continued to live at the property into the late 1980s, when it passed to other family members. The present owner acquired the property in 1998.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Andreas, A.T. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa*. Chicago, 1875.

City Directories, Muscatine. Various publishers, 1859-1959. Available as the Musser Public Library.

Lesnet, Scott, property owner. Interview by Jim Rudisill, July 31, 2005, Muscatine, Iowa

Richman, Irving B. *History of Muscatine County, Iowa*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1911.

Sanborn Map Company. "Muscatine, Iowa," Sanborn fire insurance maps. Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1883, 1888, 1892, 1899, 1907, 1912, 1919, 1928. Accessed online at: Sanborn.umi.com.

Location Map



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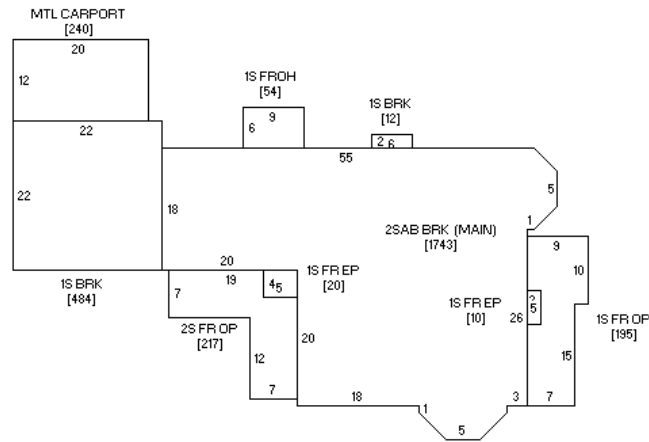
Peter Musser House
Name of Property

Muscatine
County

501 E. Mississippi Dr.
Address

Muscatine
City

Plan (from assessor's office)



(side – Mulberry Ave.)

Photograph of building (digital image)

