

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

**State Inventory No.** 29-01661       New    Supplemental  
 Part of a district with known boundaries 29-00005 (listed), 29-03685 (potential)  
 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 P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
 other names/site number Jennie Coulter Nursery, Jennie Coulter Mission, Downtown Survey Map # DT-73

**2. Location**

street & number 313 Washington Street  
 city or town Burlington       vicinity, county Des Moines  
 Legal Description:(If Rural) Township Name \_\_\_\_\_ Township No. \_\_\_\_\_ Range No. \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter of Quarter \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original City Block(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Lot(s) Lot Number 442, except W 58'9"

**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:	
	Enter number of:		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	—	buildings	<u>1</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>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 Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of "East" Downtown Burlington, IA      Historical Architectural Data Base Number 29-034

**6. Function or Use**

<b>Historic Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Current Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>01A01 – residence</u>	<u>01A01 – residence (being rehabbed)</u>
<u>10E05 – telephone company</u>	
<u>03C01 - day nursery for underprivileged children</u>	

**7. Description**

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>05C: Second Empire</u>	foundation <u>04 Stone</u>
	walls (visible material) <u>03 Brick</u>
	roof <u>08 Asphalt shingles</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 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 type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" 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 Des Moines Address 313 Washington Street  
City Burlington

Site Number 29-01661  
District Number 29-03685

**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)

05: Commerce  
29: Social History

**Significant Dates**

Construction date 1855  check if circa or estimated date  
Other dates, including renovation \_\_\_\_\_

**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 Susan Beckman and Barb Mackey, volunteers Rebecca L. McCarley, consultant, Davenport  
organization Burlington Historic Preservation Commission date November 4, 2012  
street & number City Hall, 400 Washington Street telephone 319-753-8158  
city or town Burlington state Iowa zip code 52601

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 1

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P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
Name of Property

---

Des Moines  
County

---

313 Washington Street  
Address

---

Burlington  
City

---

## 7. Narrative Description

Per the 1981 Heritage Hill Historic District nomination: Originally built as a private residence facing Washington Street (north side), this brick house is two stories plus a third floor within the mansard roof, and two stories plus a fully exposed basement on the rear. The north facade is three bays wide with an off-center wood double door and mansard roof with two pedimented dormers with arch windows. Behind the north facade mansard, the roof on the two story main portion of the house is relatively flat. Lintels are stone on the north facade with segmental brick arches elsewhere. Other features include a one story bay window on the west side and an oval window on the east side between the second and mansard floors. The front of the building with the mansard roof may have been built separately and after the main part of the building. A one-story frame projection at the rear west side has been removed. The double doorway which fronts directly on the sidewalk is currently not in use, with the entry on the side. The property includes a courtyard to the west that is created by the brick walls of adjacent commercial buildings and an iron fence on a low limestone wall on the Washington Street side. The brick was sandblasted and repointed in 1978.

This description remains generally accurate, reflecting few exterior changes in the last 30 years. The building is currently being rehabilitation by a new owner, with the entry to remain on the west/courtyard side of the building. The iron fence and stone wall were removed in 2012 as part of this work.

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House, also known as the Jennie Coulter Day Nursery, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributing within the Heritage Hill Historic District in 1981. It also appears to contribute historically and architecturally to the potential Downtown Commercial Historic District. It was the home of P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher from 1869 to 1893, and he operated his livery and undertaking business nearby through this time, rebuilding after the 1873 fire destroyed the building (demolished). It served as the offices of the Mississippi Valley Telephone Company briefly in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. From 1920 to 1979, it was the home of the Day Nursery of Jennie Coulter, which provided child care for working parents. This is one of the earliest and most significant social institutions in Burlington. It likely has individual significance under Criterion A for its historic association with this organization.

The abstract indicates that this property (east 30' of Lot 442) was sold by Jacob Pilger to George Sweeny on April 21, 1856 for \$2,975. This price would seem to indicate construction on the property by this date. On November 29, 1858, an ad appeared in the *Hawk-Eye* for a brick dwelling for rent on Washington opposite Marion Hall, which was on the northeast corner of Washington and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. This appears to indicate the presence of this house by this date. The two-story brick dwelling on the east 30' of Lot 442 was advertised for sale on December 2, 1858, confirming construction on this portion of the lot. George Sweeny advertised a two story brick dwelling with seven rooms and a good cellar for sale opposite the courthouse on Washington St in the *Hawk-Eye* on October 19, 1863. He apparently had problems selling it, as it was then "for sale at a sacrifice" in the *Hawk-Eye* on July 29,

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 2

---

<u>P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House</u>	<u>Des Moines</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>313 Washington Street</u>	<u>Burlington</u>
Address	City

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1866. It was described as having seven rooms, and noted to be a very desirable location on the south side of Washington near the business portion of the city.

P.F. Unterkircher then bought this house (east 30' of Lot 442), moving to Burlington in 1867. The 1905 biography of son Charles Unterkircher indicates that he was "a native of Burlington, where he was born April 14, 1867, at the old family home, 313 Washington Street. This house, which is still standing and occupied by tenants, dates from the early days of Burlington's history, and in its construction were used some of the timbers from the scaffold on which were hanged the notorious Rogers brothers. Our subject is the son of P. F. Unterkircher, who, in the period before the construction of railways in this section, drove a stage from Burlington to Wapello, and from Burlington to Mount Pleasant, and also conducted a livery barn" (*Biographical Review of Des Moines County* 1905: 310). P.F. Unterkircher then acquired an additional 10' to the west from W.H. Starr for \$700 on August 27, 1869, thus owning the east 40' of Lot 442. He also bought the 60 by 77 foot remaining portion of Lot 442 to the west, subdividing this portion of the lot into three lots on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and one lot on Washington in May 1874 for sale. He retained the house on the east 40' of the lot. Per his 1905 biography, P.F. Unterkircher lived in Clinton prior to moving to Des Moines County, and he moved into Burlington in 1867. He operated a brewery and then a steam laundry. He then bought the Stewart stables and entered the livery business. The business was later expanded to include undertaking. His sons joined the business, but he continued to be associated with it until his death in August 1893 (*Biographical Review of Des Moines County* 1905: 306-307). The 1880 census lists P. Fred Unterkircher (age 54) with an occupation of livery stable keeper and living at 313 Washington with wife Phoebe, son Frederick (23, livery stable), son George (18, livery stable), daughter Emma (14, son Charles (12), son Horace (10), son Ida (8), daughter Nellie (4), and daughter Maud (7 months) and a servant Louise Kaster. The 1890 city directory lists P.F. Unterkircher & Sons (F.L. and G.L.) operating an undertaking business at 212 Washington, with a livery stable at 208-210 Washington. P.F. Unterkircher is listed as living at 313 Washington, remaining here until his death. The 1896 city directory continues to list Fred L. and George L. working as P.F. Unterkircher & Sons in the undertaking and livery business at 206-210 Washington, with Mrs. P.F. Unterkircher (widow) listed as living at 313 Washington with her daughters.

The house remained in the Unterkircher family after her death, with William P. Byrne listed as living here in the 1900 city directory. The property transferred in the family on February 9, 1901. The 1905 biography notes it was then occupied by tenants. The house was sold by daughter Emma Blaul et al to John E. Andrus on May 9, 1906. He then transferred the property to the Mississippi Valley Telephone Company on December 1, 1908. The Mississippi Valley Telephone Company moved to 313 Washington in October 1907 from the Tama Building. The company started around 1896 as a competitor to the Iowa Telephone Company, which had bought the Burlington Telephone Company in 1883. Both companies operated in town in 1906 (*Burlington Evening Gazette*, March 24, 1906, sec 1, p 15, sec 2 p 11). The Iowa Telephone Company later acquired the smaller company, and they are listed here in the 1913 city directory. A handful of short-term tenants are then listed here after 1915.

The Day Nursery run by Jennie Coulter moved here in 1920. Jennie Coulter was a well-recognized woman of Burlington. Her 1934 obituary notes that she was about 60 years old and devoted practically her entire life to the care and welfare of poor children without any personal gain. The Embalming Burial Case Company bought the two story brick house occupied by the late P.F. Unterkircher for the

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 3

P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
Name of Property

Des Moines  
County

313 Washington Street  
Address

Burlington  
City

organization. The vacant lot to the west is also noted. The lower floor and lot would be used by the day nursery, with a modern flat being planned for the second story. A playground was being equipped on the lot for the children of the nursery, with swings and slides. Mrs. E.P. Eastman applauded the effort by the company to provide better accommodations for the organization, which provided care for children for working mothers ("Day Nursery Gets a New Home," *Hawk-Eye*, July 1, 1920, 6). Jennie Coulter gave up a position as stenographer at McConnell Company to start a mission for poor boys and girls in June 1900. She held meetings with children in various parts of the city in the mornings and afternoons, as well as running Sunday School classes. She provided food and clothing, as well as personal care. Her mission found room at the old Catholic church in 1909 and then in Grimes Block in 1914 and then over Witte's drug store on Jefferson on September 12, 1917. The 1920 city directory lists the Day Nursery at 323 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The Lahee Building at 313 Washington was then bought by the late E.P. Eastman for her use. The nursery was noted as having been here for the last four years in January 1925. Since 1905, the Sheldon circle of King's Daughters provided financial support for her mission, and they presented gold watch to her in January 1925. The building was sold to the Embalming Burial Case Company, who continued to let Coulter use the building and added a play yard for the nursery. She cared for hundreds of children with working parents, with problems with the law, and with poor home conditions. She had a heart condition and died of a heart attack on the way to the drug store for medication ("Miss Jennie Coulter Dies," *Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, August 13, 1934, 2; "Sheldon Circle Gives Miss Coulter a Watch," *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, January 10, 1925, 6). It was known as the Jennie Coulter Mission and the Jennie Coulter Nursery at various points over the years. According to a July 24, 1977 *Hawkeye* article, the "center was incorporated in September of 1934, a month after Jennie Coulter dropped dead in downtown Burlington at Third and Jefferson. She died Aug. 13, 1934, with *The Hawk-Eye Gazette* hailing her as "one of Burlington's most loved and respected women," cited her "self-sacrificing life" and "the immeasurable good" she did for the city" ("Nursery has filled the bill," *Hawk-Eye*, July 24, 1977).

The article also states that Philanthropist E.P. Eastman bought the building at 313 Washington and allowed Miss Coulter to use it; he sold it to Embalming Burial Case Co, who also let her have it. Then Mrs. Eastman bought the building specifically for her ("Nursery has filled the bill," *Hawk-Eye*, July 24, 1977). This is supported by the abstract and the 1920 article. The Iowa Telephone Company sold the building on June 9, 1920 to A.C. Ita, trustee. He then transferred it to the Embalming Burial Case Company on February 18, 1924. The property then transferred from the company to Millie Eastman on February 23, 1927. She continued to own it until her death in 1959. Millie Eastman left the Washington street property to the Jennie Coulter Day Nursery along with \$5,000 in her will for the organization to continue to provide care for children of low income working parents. The property was to be held by a trustee for no more than 10 years, with confirmation that the institution was on a firm basis. In 1969, it was ruled that it was, so the trustee then transferred the property to The Jennie Coulter Nursery on May 14, 1969 (Abstract, "Day Nursery Can Finally Call Building Home," *Hawk-Eye*, June 22, 1969, sec 2, p 1). The Norman Circle of Kings Daughters continued to run the nursery until 1979. With daycare licensing mandated for them in 1977, they did not meet requirements and chose to close the operations ("70-year tradition coming to end," *Hawk-Eye*, March 18, 1979).

The Jennie Coulter Nursery sold the property to Gretchen Delaney in 1979, and it remained vacant for many years. It was purchased in 2012 by Karel van Haeften and Terry Arellano, current owners.

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 4

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P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
Name of Property

---

Des Moines  
County

---

313 Washington Street  
Address

---

Burlington  
City

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Antrobus, A.T. *History of Des Moines County Iowa and Its People*. Chicago, IL: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915.

*Biographical Review of Des Moines County, Iowa*. Chicago: Hobart Publishing Company, 1905.

City Directories, Burlington, Iowa, various dates. On microfiche at the Burlington Public Library

Deed records, per transfer books at Des Moines County Auditor's Office.

Newspapers, various titles and editions. Particular special editions utilized:

*Burlington Evening Gazette*, March 24, 1906

*Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, September 2, 1938

*Burlington Hawk-Eye Gazette*, August 4, 1942

*Burlington Hawk-Eye*, July 10, 1962

*Burlington Hawk-Eye*, July 4, 1976

*Perspective Map of the City of Burlington, IA*. Milwaukee, WI: American Publishing Co., 1889.

*Portrait and Biographical Album of Des Moines County, Iowa*. Chicago: Acme Publishing Company, 1888.

Sanborn Map Company. "Burlington, Iowa," Fire Insurance Maps. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1886, 1892, 1900, 1931, 1952.

Smith, Claudia, and Marie Landon. 1976 survey of sites in Burlington. Iowa Site Inventory forms prepared on file at State Historic Preservation Office, Des Moines, IA.

Vertical files. Files on business/industry as well as individual businesses. Burlington Public Library, Burlington, Iowa.

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
 State Historical Society of Iowa  
**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number 29-01661  
 Related District Number 29-03586

Page 5

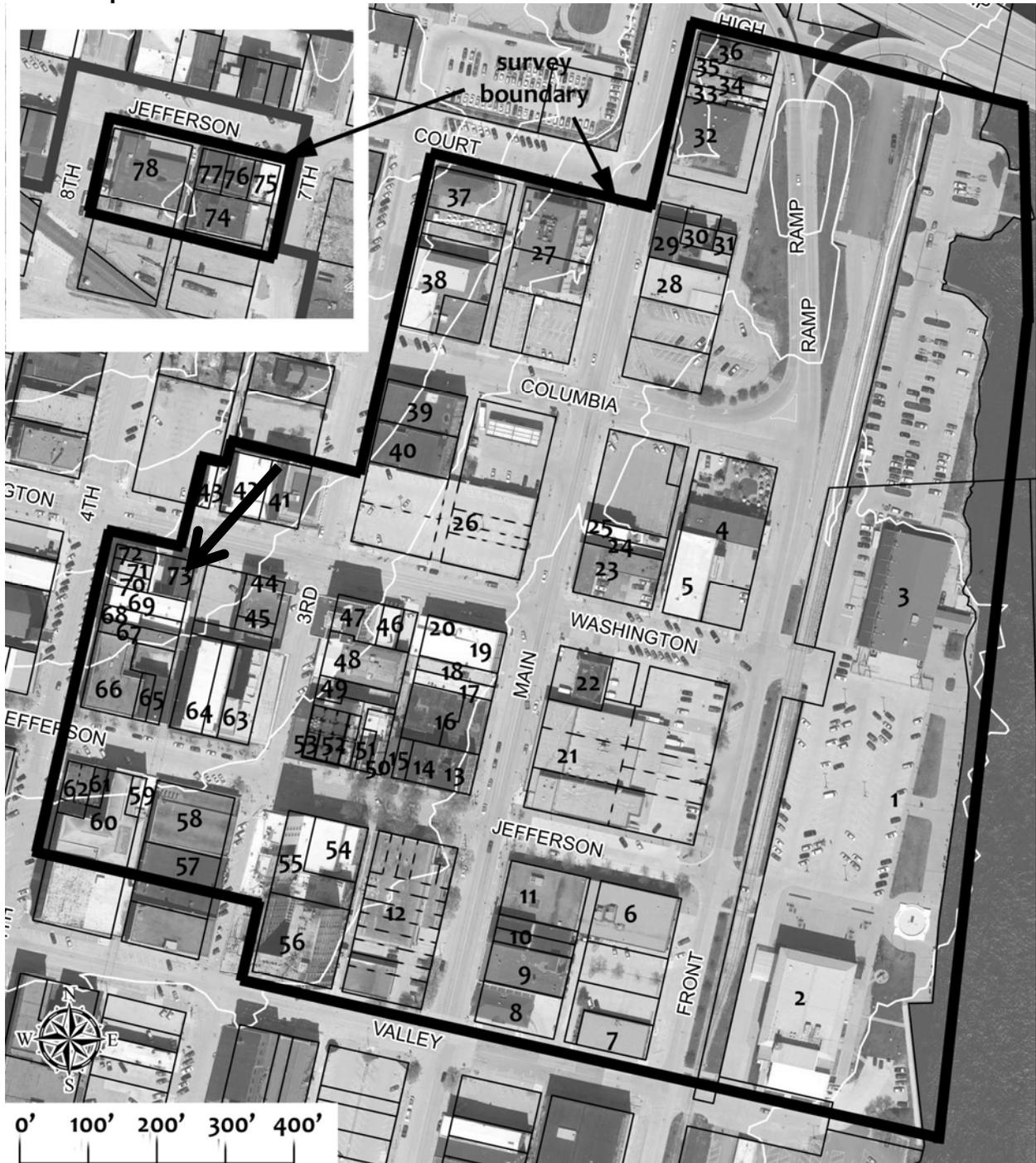
P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
 Name of Property

Des Moines  
 County

313 Washington Street  
 Address

Burlington  
 City

**Location map**



Base aerial photography by Aerial Services Inc for Des Moines County GIS Commission, March 2010.

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Site Number 29-01661

Related District Number 29-03586

Page 6

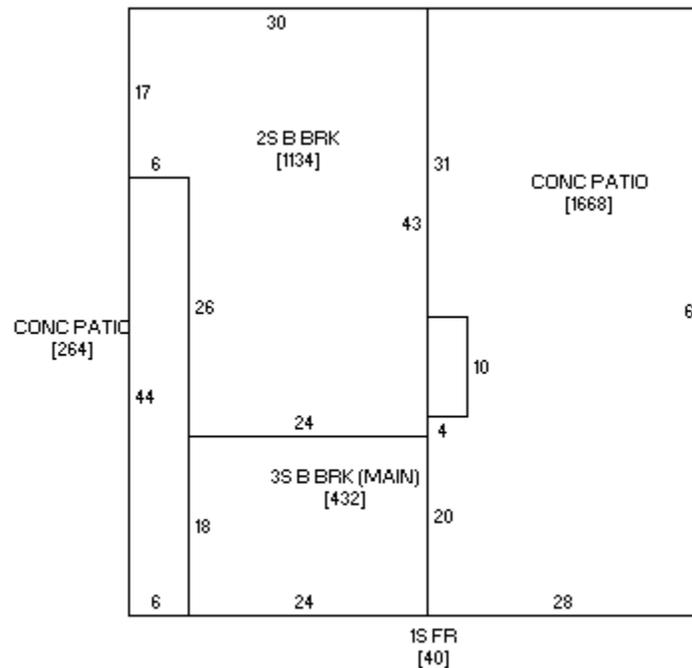
P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
Name of Property

Des Moines  
County

313 Washington Street  
Address

Burlington  
City

## Building plan (from assessor's website)



## Historic images

*none identified*

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
**Iowa Site Inventory Form  
Continuation Sheet**

Site Number 29-01661  
Related District Number 29-03586

Page 7

P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
Name of Property

Des Moines  
County

313 Washington Street  
Address

Burlington  
City

**Digital photographs**



**Photograph 29-01661-001 – North and west elevations, looking southeast (McCarley, June 20, 2012).**

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
**Iowa Site Inventory Form  
Continuation Sheet**

Site Number 29-01661  
Related District Number 29-03586

Page 8

P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
Name of Property

Des Moines  
County

313 Washington Street  
Address

Burlington  
City



Photograph 29-01661-002 – East and north elevations, looking southwest (McCarley, June 20, 2012).

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
**Iowa Site Inventory Form  
Continuation Sheet**

Site Number 29-01661  
Related District Number 29-03586

Page 9

P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
Name of Property

Des Moines  
County

313 Washington Street  
Address

Burlington  
City



Photograph 29-01661-003 – East elevation, looking west (McCarley, June 20, 2012).

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
**Iowa Site Inventory Form  
Continuation Sheet**

Site Number 29-01661  
Related District Number 29-03586

Page 10

P. Frederick and Phoebe Unterkircher House  
Name of Property

Des Moines  
County

313 Washington Street  
Address

Burlington  
City



Photograph 29-01661-004 –West elevation, looking northeast (McCarley, November 15, 2012).