

SMITH HOUSE  
124 East Walnut Street  
Greencastle  
Putnam County  
Indiana

HABS No. IN-270

HABS  
IND  
67-GREC,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

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Location: 124 East Walnut Street  
Greencastle, Putnam County, Indiana

USGS Greencastle, Indiana Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
16.511750.4387940

Significance: The Smith House is located within the Courthouse Square Historic District of Greencastle. The period of significance for the district is 1823-1939 and encompasses a variety of popular architectural styles. The district consists primarily of an intact grouping of commercial and governmental use buildings. As such, the district's most prominent buildings include the Opera House (c. 1880), First National Bank (c. 1900), Putnam County Public Library (1902), Putnam County Courthouse (1903), U.S. Post Office (1910), and the Putnam County Jail (1939). There are, however, in the blocks surrounding the courthouse square, several structures originally built for residential purposes. The Smith House, constructed c. 1905 in the Free Classic style contributes to the significance of the district in terms of size, scale and period of construction.

The original owners of house were Harry M. and Anna Smith. A biography of Harry M. Smith is included in Jesse Weik's History of Putnam County, Indiana, published in 1910. Smith was a prominent local citizen, primarily due to his ownership of the Greencastle *Banner*, a local newspaper. Born in Thorntown, Indiana in 1862, Smith moved to Greencastle in 1885 following a newspaper apprenticeship at the Danville *Union*. In 1889, he bought the Greencastle *Times*. In 1890, this paper was consolidated with the *Banner*. In 1898, Smith took full control of the *Banner*, one of the state's oldest newspapers and continued its role as an advocate of Republican politics. Smith was a leading proponent for the construction of a new courthouse and pressed for other public improvement projects.

Description: The Smith House is a two-story, wood frame house with hipped roof and is basically square in plan. The house sits atop a raised foundation consisting of three courses of rock-faced limestone blocks. Though considered Free Classic in design, many of the original character-defining architectural features have been obscured by the application of aluminum siding and panning. Each elevation is framed with two-story pilasters with decorative terra cotta capitals. While the capitals are exposed, the

pilasters have been covered with vertical aluminum siding. The house retains all of its original one-over-one wood double-hung sash windows. Some of the window openings still feature their original wood storm sash while most have been replaced by modern aluminum storm/screen units. The hipped roof, which rises to a square flat section, is covered with asphalt shingles has four flat-roofed dormers, one on each side of the house. The dormers on the north and west elevations have three double-hung sash windows while the dormers on the east and south have only two. The roof contains a single brick chimney which has been covered with a stucco coating.

The main facade of the house faces north. A concrete sidewalk and steps lead up to a one-story wood porch, with four round wood columns and wood porch railings, which spans the entire facade. Aluminum panning has been added to the porch as a skirting and boxing the spindle area. The original column capitals have been replaced with square wood blocks; however, two pilasters, located where the porch adjoins the house, still feature original terra capitals, similar to those on the two-story corner pilasters. A covered entry on the west elevation features concrete steps, limestone foundation and round columns. A three-sided, one-story projecting bay is located on the first floor of the east elevation. The south, or rear elevation, was altered c.1930 by the installation of a steep, sloping driveway at the southwest corner for basement level parking. A modern two-bay garage was added at grade level at a later date. The garage has a wood balustrade which encompasses its flat roof. The rear entry has a concrete foundation and steps.

The basement consists of mechanical and storage spaces. The finishes include concrete floors, limestone block and glazed block wall surfaces and open wood joist ceilings. A room at the northwest corner of the basement features a raised wood floor and wallboard panels on the walls and ceiling.

The main entrance from the front porch consists of an oak door and sidelights, all of which feature decorative beveled, leaded glass lights. The entrance opens to a central foyer with golden oak baseboards, chair rails, moldings and door surrounds. The finishes within the foyer consist of a carpeted floor, papered walls and painted ceiling. At the northern end of the foyer are pocket doors which open to rooms on either side. The front parlor in the northeast corner of the house features an unusual fireplace mantle made of brick and cast stone. The masonry is currently

painted. Adorning the segmental arched firebox opening is an unique zig-zag pattern. Two rows of egg-and-dart moldings separate the lower and upper sections of the mantel. The wood trim in the parlor consists of oak baseboards, moldings and door and window surrounds with a dark, fumed finish. The front room in the northwest corner of the house also features the same fumed oak baseboards, moldings and door and window surrounds. The finishes in both front rooms consist of carpeted floors, papered walls and painted ceilings. The original dining room is located in the southeast corner of the first floor and contains the projecting bay window. The dining room can be accessed from the front parlor through a pocket doorway or from the foyer through a single panel doorway. Fumed oak baseboards, moldings and a plate rail encircle the room. The dining room has a carpeted floor, papered walls and painted ceiling. A single panel swing-door connects to the kitchen through a narrow pantry. The kitchen and pantry both feature built-in wood cabinets. All of the woodwork in the kitchen and pantry has been painted. The floors have a linoleum covering and painted walls and ceilings. At the south end of the foyer is a wide doorway which openings to an elevator shaft. The shaft construction and cab, lined with oak paneling and featuring brass hardware, appear to be original. The cab, which originally traveled from the basement to the second floor level, is currently located at the basement level. The elevator has been rendered unusable by the recent installation of HVAC equipment. At the southwest end of the foyer is the main staircase. The golden oak staircase features a newel posts composed of beveled panels and dentil moldings and turned balusters. The treads, risers and landing have been carpeted. The wall beneath the balusters and the underside of the staircase feature series of beveled panels. A short hall runs beside the staircase leading to the west entrance; a small bathroom is located beneath the staircase.

The main staircase leads up to central hall on the second floor. The hall contains multi-panel wood doors which open to four bedrooms, a bathroom, the elevator and a stairway to the attic. All of the wood baseboards, moldings, doors and door and window surrounds on the second floor have been painted. The finishes included carpet or linoleum floors, painted or papered walls and painted ceilings.

The attic consists of a large open room with wood plank floor and rough-coat plaster walls and ceiling surfaces. The attic contains a free-standing cedar closet of recent construction.

History:

Harry M. and Anna Allen Smith purchased the property and adjoining lot in 1901-02. The house first appears on the 1907 Sanborn Map Company's Insurance Maps of Greencastle, Putnam County, Indiana. The architect and builder are unknown. In 1911 Samuel R. Rariden, a relative of Mrs. Smith, became associated the *Banner* and in 1924 became the publisher. Upon Smith's death in 1932, Rariden took over the house and lived there until his death in the early 1960's. His daughter Elizabeth lived in the house until her death in 1965 and the house remained in the family until 1967. At that time, Mr. and Mrs. John Tzouanakis, well-known Greek immigrants to Greencastle, purchased the house. After Mr. Tzouanakis' death, Mrs. Tzouanakis continued to live there until 1986 when the house was sold to Alan Stanley & Associates and converted into office use. The Putnam County Public Library purchased the property from Alan Stanley & Associates in 1993.

The structure was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on March 1, 1984 as part of the Courthouse Square Historic District. This recordation project was undertaken by the Putnam County Public Library in compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort before relocation.

Sources:

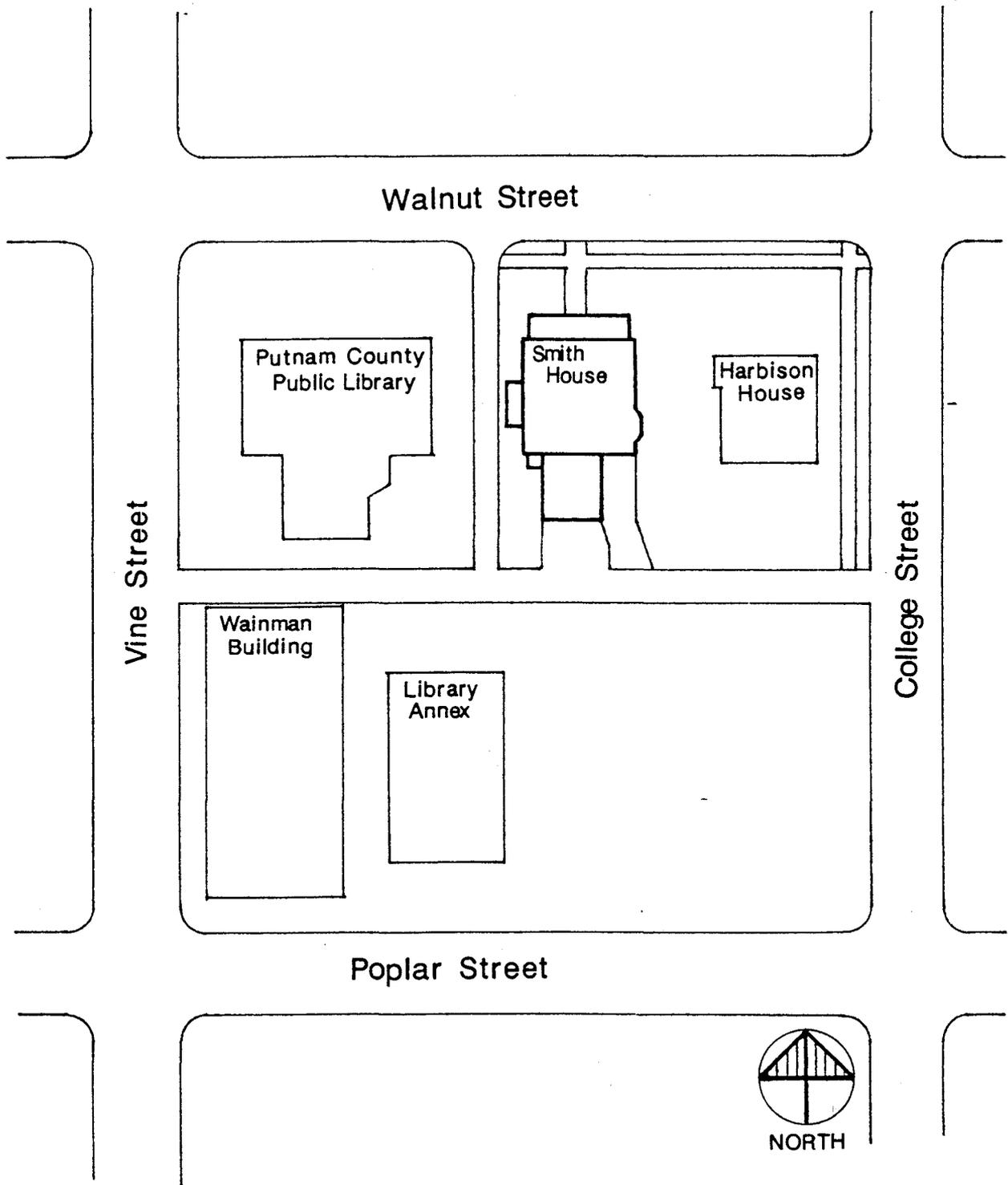
Courthouse Square Historic District. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1983.

Putnam County Interim Report. Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory, 1982.

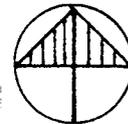
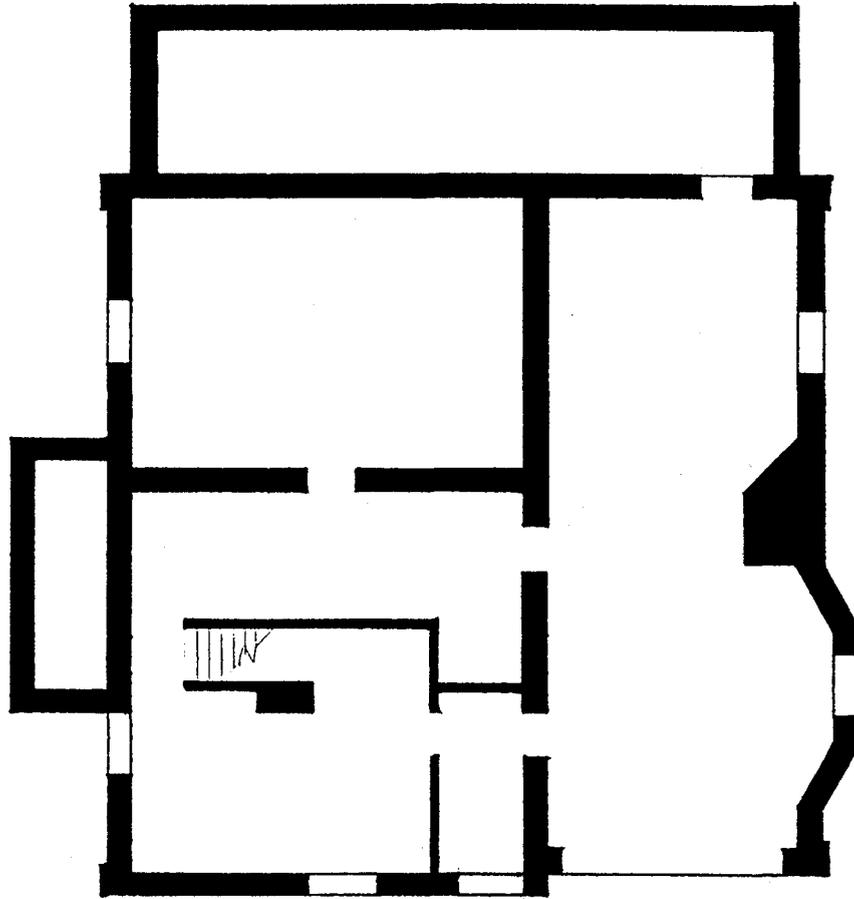
Smith House. Historic Preservation Certification Application - Part 1, 1994.

Historian:

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September, 1995

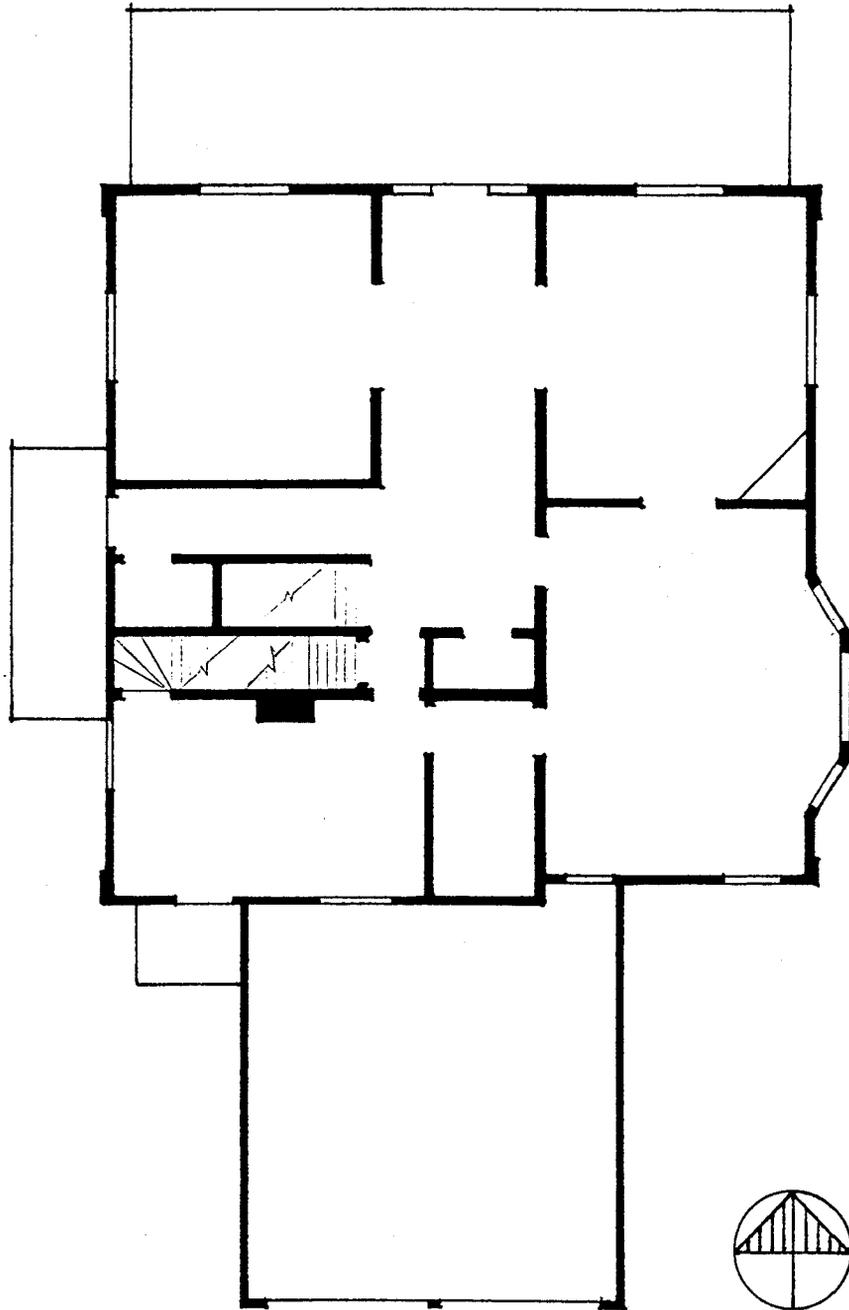


Site Plan

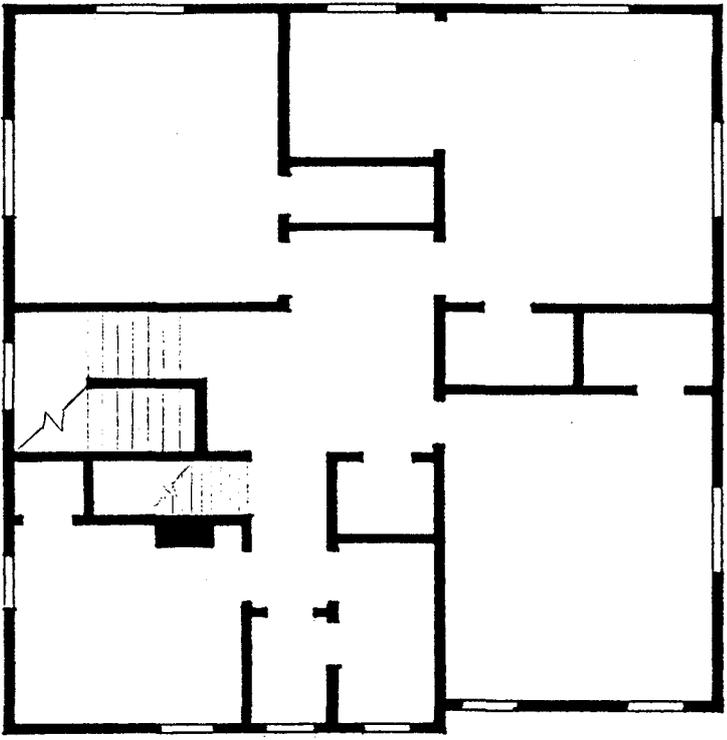


NORTH

Basement



First Floor



Second Floor

