

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Knott, Adams R., Frederick L. and Martha (Taylor), House

other names/site number Col. Frank W. Hart House; Rev. James and Jessie N. Hughes House

Name of Multiple Property Listing Historic Resources of Mt. Vernon, Iowa

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

street & number 417 A Avenue SE  not for publication

city or town Mount Vernon  vicinity

state Iowa county Linn zip code 52314

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

State Historical Society of Iowa  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
1	1	buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1	1	<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

EARLY REPUBLIC

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE/Limestone

walls: BRICK

\_\_\_\_\_

roof: ASPHALT

other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

**Summary Paragraph** (Briefly describe the current, general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

This two-story brick house was built circa 1857 on a large lot on the west side of A Avenue in Mount Vernon, Linn County, Iowa. The house displays vernacular Early Republic stylistic influences, with significant features including the five-rank fenestration of the facade, the side-gabled orientation, and the front doors with side lights and transom windows. The foundation is locally-quarried limestone, and the walls are built of reddish-orange soft mud bricks manufactured locally and laid in 7:1 common bond. The windows and doors have flat brick soldier-course lintels and dressed stone sills. The largest rear addition was made in the early 1900s, and a detached frame garage was added circa 1900. The house retains excellent to fair historic integrity, with excellent integrity in the aspects of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association. The house has good integrity of feeling and fair integrity of setting. The detached garage is of historic age but was built after the period of significance for this property. Therefore, the garage is considered a noncontributing building.

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**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

(Iowa SHPO Additional Instructions: After the main **Narrative Description**, discuss any physical alterations since the period of significance under the subheading **Alterations**, and the seven aspects of integrity as it applies to the property in a **Statement of Integrity**.)

This two-story brick house was built circa 1857 on a large lot on the west side of A Avenue in the southeast part of Mount Vernon. The lot rises from street level with a set of concrete steps ascending to the level house site. The house is sited towards the southeast corner of this lot leaving a large back and north side yard. There are mature shade and pine trees surrounding the house and along the street frontage and side yard areas. A concrete sidewalk is along the east boundary of the lot parallel to the avenue, with a perpendicular concrete sidewalk leading west to the quarry-faced stone block steps and porch stoop at the front entry to the house. Historically, the steps down to the street were also built of the same quarry-faced stone blocks and were still in place at least until the late 1960s. The house has a side-gabled roofline that has a moderate eave overhang with cornice molding and a wide frieze board under the eaves. Unlike similar houses of this vintage in Mount Vernon, this house does not have cornice returns. The walls are built of reddish-orange soft mud bricks manufactured locally and laid in 7:1 common bond, or seven stretcher courses for every one header course of bricks. The windows and doors have flat brick soldier-course lintels and dressed-stone sills. The windows in the original section of the house are all 6/6 double-hung, wooden-sash windows. Today, the windows have 1/1 storm windows but had previously had 2/2 wooden-framed storm windows that were still being used into at least the late 1960s. The design of the house is influenced by the Early Republic style as evidenced by the five-rank fenestration, side-gabled orientation, and doors with side lights and transom windows. A one-story brick-veneered frame addition was made to the rear of the house circa 1900. A frame sleeping porch was later added to the upper floor of this addition, with another frame addition then made to the lower brick section of the rear addition. These additions were made in the period between circa 1900 and the 1930s. The house retains excellent historic integrity, with the rear additions being the only modifications of note and those additions are of historic age and are compatible with the design and style of the main house. A detached frame garage was built circa 1900 and may have functioned as a small barn before being converted into a garage by the 1930s-1940s (Sanborn 1941). It is considered noncontributing because it was built after the property's period of significance, which is circa 1857 to 1870.

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### **Façade (East Side)<sup>1</sup>**

The front of the house shows symmetrical five-rank fenestration consisting of centered doors on the first and second stories flanked by two single 6/6 double-hung, wooden-sash windows on both stories (Figure 1). The main front door has a modern glass storm door protecting a historic wooden-paneled door with brass hardware. The door has a transom consisting of 11 small panes of glass in a single row. The door is flanked by side lights consisting of 9 small panes of glass vertically stacked in the upper three-quarters of each side light and a decorative wooden panel below. The door is also flanked by two wooden pilasters with Tuscan capitals. The door is sheltered by a portico porch that is certainly of historic-age but probably represents a porch that was rebuilt or replaced circa 1900 given its excellent state of preservation.<sup>2</sup> Either way, the porch complements the original style of the house and does not detract from the historic integrity of this property. The porch is supported by two tall wooden columns that are fluted and have Tuscan capitals and plinths setting on the stone porch (Figure 2). There are two square fluted pilasters at the wall flanking the entryway. The porch roof is flat with a wooden railing around the edge of the roof that has wood-paneled square corner posts and turned balusters. The porch floor of the balcony had deteriorated and was replaced by the current owners as were the spindles, which were replicated and then painted. The second-floor door can exit onto the porch roof as a balcony. This door has the same transom window and side lights as the first-floor door but lacks the flanking wooden pilasters and has a simpler wooden casement and surround. The wooden-paneled, second-floor door has a multi-pane storm door. Given the presence of the second-floor door, this house would originally have had a porch similar to the extant porch.



**Figure 1. Façade of the Knott House looking North. Photograph taken May 4, 2018.**

<sup>1</sup> In this area of Mount Vernon, the streets are oriented on a southwest to northeast angle. Therefore, in this narrative, “east” is actually southeasterly, “north” is northeasterly, “west” is northwesterly, and “south” is southwesterly.”

<sup>2</sup> The façade and porch configuration are echoed in the façade of the Elijah D. and Mary J. (Adams) Waln House (also a Military Road era brick house in Mount Vernon), suggesting a common builder, most likely the Albright brothers.



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**Figure 2. Detail of front entry of the Knott House looking NW. Photograph taken May 4, 2018.**

### South Side

The gable end of the house has two single 6/6 double-hung, wooden-sash windows symmetrically placed on the first and second stories (Figure 3). There is a two-story, shed-roofed addition on the rear that has a brick-clad first story and a wood-lap second story that probably functioned originally as a sleeping porch (Figure 4). The south side of the second story has a row of four 1/1 wooden-sash windows, with the first story having a single 6/6 double-hung, wooden-sash window with the same type of flat brick soldier-course lintel as on the two-story section of the house. The bricks on the one-story addition are laid in a running-bond veneer. This is definitely an addition to the original two-story section of the house as evidenced by the abrupt boundary in the brickwork of the two sections. The color of the bricks in the rear addition also appear to be redder than orange indicating a different source for the later brick. The addition was in place by the time of the 1941 Sanborn map (Figure 5).



**Figure 3. Knott House looking NNW. Photograph taken May 4, 2018.**

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Figure 4. South side and rear of Knott House looking East. Photograph taken May 4, 2018.

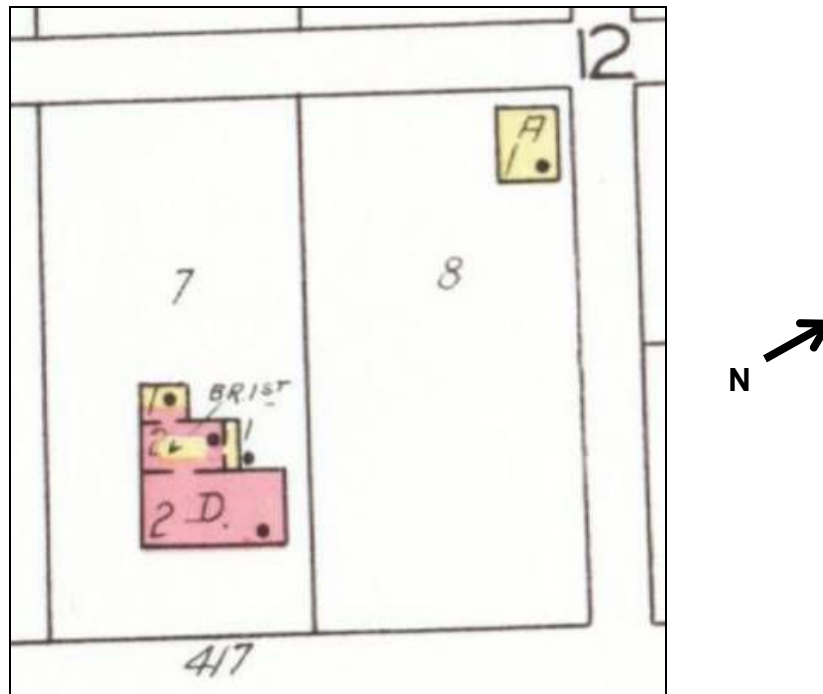


Figure 5. 1941 Sanborn fire insurance map showing the Knott House with the rear addition and the automobile garage in the NW corner of the property by the alley. Source: Sanborn 1941



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Sleeping porches became popular in the early 1900s; therefore, this addition to the Knott House would have been added within the first three decades of the 20th century.<sup>3</sup> Given that the two-story addition has a stone foundation closely matching that of the original portion of the house, a circa 1900 date of construction is suggested.

### Rear (West Side)

The rear of the house is covered on the south half by the two-story rear addition described above for the south side (Figure 6). The upper sleeping-porch structure has two sets of paired 1/1 double-hung, wooden-sash windows centered on the west side (see Figure 5). The brick portion of this addition on the west side is covered by a hip-roofed, one-story frame porch that extends to the west. This porch has wood lap siding, a wood lattice screen covering the foundation level, paired 1/1 windows on the south side and tripled 1/1 windows on the west side. The entrance to this porch is on the north side that has a door to the left and a single 1/1 window to the right. The porch is reached by a set of open wooden stairs up to a modern wooden deck that has a modern turned baluster railing. To the left of the porch on the brick portion of the rear addition is a single 6/6 double-hung, wooden-sash window with flat brick soldier-course lintel. On the north side of the brick portion is another hip-roofed, one-story frame bump-out that is clad with wood lap siding and has no opening on the west side but has a centered 6/6 double-hung wooden-sash window with a small fixed four-pane window to the left and a two-pane window in the basement level below. The bump-out has a poured concrete foundation indicating a later addition than the two-story addition. It was in place by 1941; therefore, a 1910s-1930s date of construction is suggested (see Figures 5 and 6).



**Figure 6. Rear and north side of Knott House looking South. Photograph taken May 4, 2018.**

<sup>3</sup> Such porches were initially popular in the early 1900s because they “offered a healthy and comfortable escape from the ‘vitiated’ indoor air” (Slider 2012). In the early 1900s, tuberculosis was a major health threat and fresh air was considered one of the best treatments for this lung ailment. However, on a practical level, the second-floor sleeping porch, usually screened in, provided both privacy and comfort on hot summer nights in the days before indoor air conditioning (Slider 2012).



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The only portion of the original west side of the two-story portion of the house has a single 6/6 wooden-sash, double-hung window on each floor. Behind the house is a flagstone patio. There is also a chimney of dark red brick added to the exterior wall at the junction of the original section and the rear addition that pierces the eave, with a metal flue extending above the roofline. This chimney is a later addition.

### North Side

The north side of the rear addition has paired 1/1 windows in the second-story frame portion (Figure 7). The original two-story brick portion of the house has three 6/6 double-hung, wooden-sash windows placed symmetrically across both the second and first stories. It is interesting to note that this gable end has three-rank fenestration while the opposite gable end only has two-rank fenestration, somewhat unusual for a house of this style, which would typically have the same fenestration on both gable ends. There are several iron tie rods inserted into this gable end to help stabilize the brick walls in areas where older brick repairs had been made. There are two windows in the basement level of the stone foundation on this side of the house. The foundation visible on this end of the house is a rough-cut or quarry-face limestone block construction. The north side yard is landscaped with a stone fireplace added in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Figure 7. North and front of the Knott House looking WSW. Photograph taken May 4, 2018.**



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## Interior

Notable features on the interior include: the elaborate wooden casement and surround of the front door that includes a curving and peaked molded lintel board and flanking wooden pilasters with capitals, a feature which is repeated in smaller scale at the doors that exit off the central hall and on all the ground-floor windows in the front rooms (Figures 8-10). The interior doors also have glass-pane transoms. Below the windows are raised wooden panels. The central hall has an open staircase made of walnut that has turned balusters painted white and a molded railing that is varnished. At the foot of the staircase is a turned newel post. The dining room has built-in cupboards with glass-pane doors and a wooden-panel chair rail around the walls. There is a narrow-board hardwood floor in the dining room that replaced the original plank flooring in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the end of the central hall is a wide doorway with French doors. This doorway has a cornice-molded flat lintel and plain surround. A modern kitchen is in the rear addition. The central hall on the second floor shows the same type of elaborate wooden surrounds on the interior of the door to the porch balcony as seen on the front entry door below. The woodwork around the second-floor doors on the central hall is also the same as seen on the hallway doors below but are simpler peaked moldings on the bedroom interior-sides of the doors and on the windows in the bedrooms (see Figure 10). The windows in the front bedrooms flanking the hallway also have the same type of lower raised wooden panels as on the first-floor windows. The open staircase railing lines the hallway on the second floor making for an open hallway in the front half of the house. The ceiling heights in the original portion of the house are nearly 11 feet in height. The base boards around each room are quite tall and have a complex profile. The current owners modernized the bathrooms and the kitchen and turned the back porch into a den and the second floor sleeping porch into a formal bedroom (Zabel 2016).

The front door of the house enters into a central hallway that has the open stairs to the second floor along the south wall. There are two large rooms flanking the hallway and entered from the hall just inside the front door. There are now doors connecting into the rear additions, with the French doors at the opening at the west end of the hall. The second floor also has a central hall, with bedrooms to either side; however, the bedroom on the south side was later reduced in size to make room for a bathroom that is entered from the hall but also has a connecting door to the rear bedroom in the former sleeping porch.

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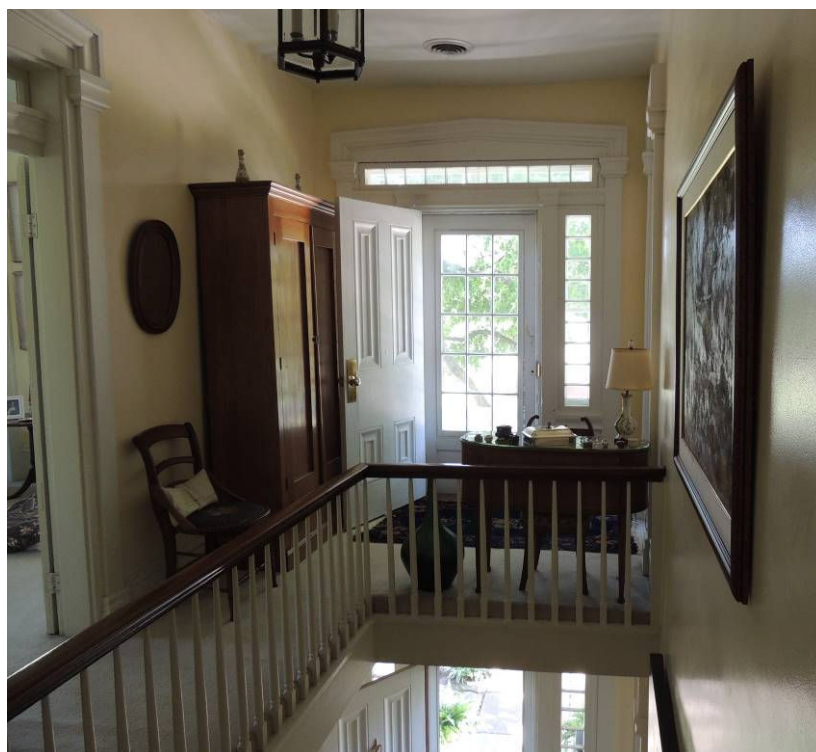
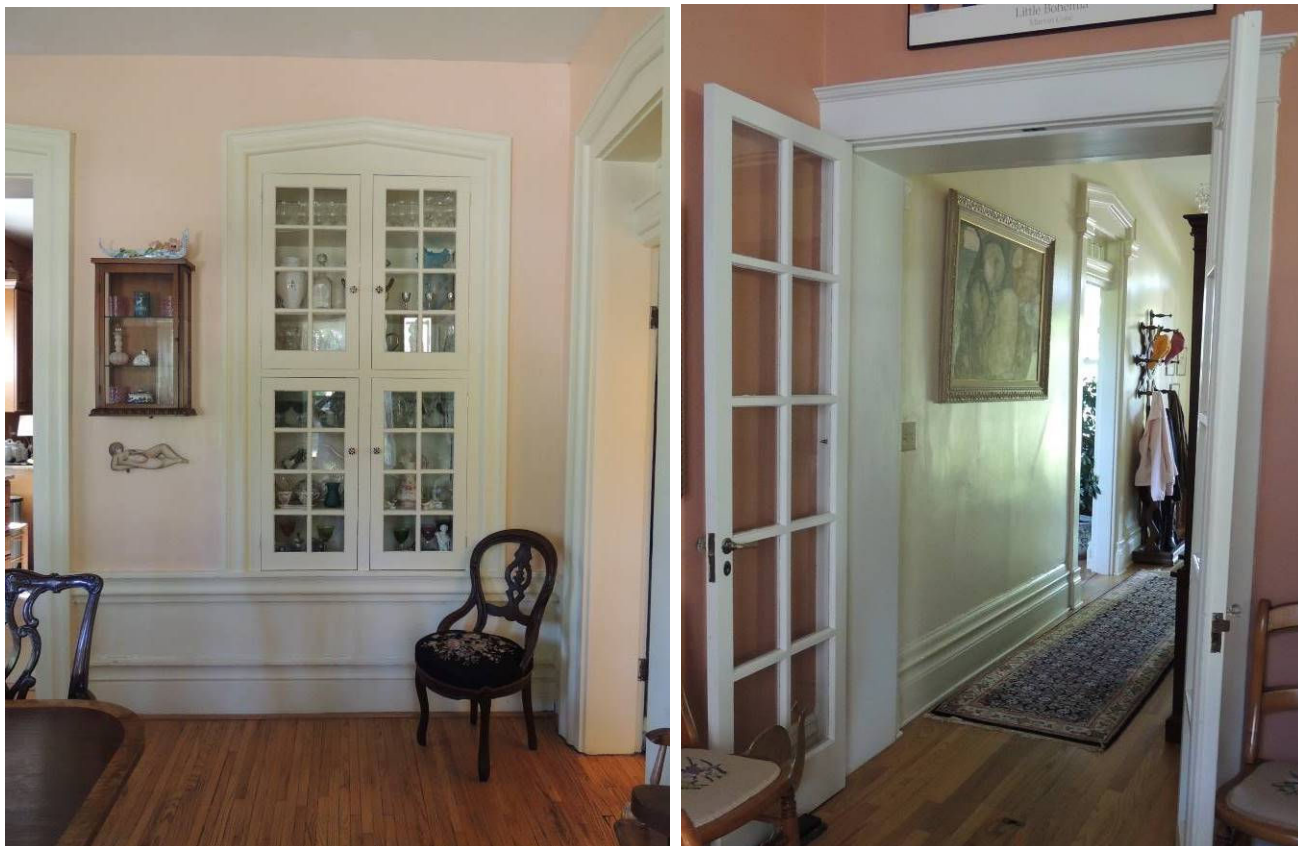
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**Figure 8. Interior views of the Knott House. Top, left to right: front entry door and newel post and staircase from the second floor. Bottom: Interior of front room showing window surrounds and paneling. Photographs taken June 3, 2018.**

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**Figure 9. Interior views of the Knott House. Top row, left to right: woodwork, flooring, and built-in cabinets in the dining room, French doors leading into the front hallway. Bottom: Second-floor hallway looking towards balcony door. Photographs taken June 3, 2018.**



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**Figure 10. Interior views of the Knott House. Top: front bedroom on second floor showing window surrounds and woodwork. Bottom: Detail of one of the bedroom doors into the hallway. Photographs taken June 3, 2018.**

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### **Barn/Garage (Noncontributing Building)**

This front-gabled frame building is located in the northwest corner of the lot next to the alley, which also serves as the driveway to this building (Figure 11). This building has a single-wide garage door opening in the east gable end. This opening historically had folding or sliding wooden doors that were taken off but are stored inside of the building. The foundation consists of two courses of rough-cut limestone blocks, with the floor of the building a concrete slab that was added when it was converted into a garage. The exterior is clad with horizontal, wooden drop siding painted white. The moderate eave overhang of the gabled roof has exposed rafter ends. There are small fixed-pane windows on each side of the building. The interior of the barn/garage reveals that this is an older building that was later converted into a garage. The interior framing shows sawn post-and-beam framing with mortise-and-tenon joinery fastened with wooden pegs indicating that this outbuilding was built as a small barn or carriage house around 1900 and was converted into a garage in the 1930s-1940s. It was shown as an automobile garage on the 1941 Sanborn map (see Figure 5). However, because it was likely built after the period of significance for this property (end date 1870), this building is counted as noncontributing but its presence enhances rather than detracts from the overall historic integrity of this property.



**Figure 11. Left: Detached barn/garage looking West; Right Detail of interior framing showing mortise-and-tenon pegged joinery. Photograph taken March 30, 2019.**

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## Statement of Integrity

This house retains excellent historic integrity on both the exterior and interior most importantly in the aspects of design, materials, and workmanship but also of location and association. The house has good integrity of feeling and fair integrity of setting. The integrity of location is excellent because this house is on its original site and retains a large landscaped lot.

The house has integrity of location being located on its original site and maintaining much of its original parcel. The integrity of design this house is reflected in its representation of a well-preserved example of the Early Republic style that has been little modified on the exterior and interior. The largest rear addition was made in the early 1900s, with the design of the additions compatible with the original brick house and include a one-story section covered with brick and repeating the same type of lintel design as the original portion of the house. The two-story, front portico porch is probably not the original structure but likely replaced or rebuilt a similar type of porch at this location. However, this porch was probably added circa 1900 and does not detract from the overall historic integrity of the brick house. There have been some interior updates, such as the modern kitchen and bathrooms, and the installation of newer storm windows and storm doors. However, the house retains its original 6/6 double-hung wooden-sash windows, brickwork, elaborate interior woodwork, a historic if not original front porch, and limestone foundation.

The excellent integrity of materials is reflected in the use of locally-manufactured reddish-orange bricks and locally-quarried rough-cut limestone blocks in the original circa 1857 house, with limestone and bricks also used in the construction of the circa 1900 rear addition.

The excellent integrity of workmanship is reflected in the retention of distinctive elements of the original house design including the masonry work and the type of lintels above the windows.

The integrity of association is excellent because it reflects the early brick building traditions common in Mount Vernon and is a well-preserved example of that tradition.

The integrity of feeling is good because the house and its immediate surroundings still impart a strong sense of time and place of an early brick home in Mount Vernon.

The integrity of setting is only fair because of the construction of a modern house to the south of this historic home and modern office buildings to the west; however, none of the modern buildings obstruct the public view of the historic house, with the office buildings screened from this house by trees and fencing. Otherwise, the setting around the house is still a large, landscaped lawn with mature shade and pine trees, flower beds, and shrubbery.



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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

**Period of Significance**

c.1857-1870

**Significant Dates**

c.1857

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation** (if applicable)

**Architect/Builder**

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### Statement of Significance

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Adams R., Frederick L. and Martha (Taylor) Knott House is locally significant and eligible for listing under the "Military Road-era Buildings, Structures, and Objects, c.1840-70" context and the "Mt. Vernon Local Brick Buildings, c.1840-93" context of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Submission, *Historic Resources of Mt. Vernon, Iowa*. The Knott House is significant under Criterion A of the Military Road-era context as a property "that illustrate[s] the effect the Military Road had on Mount Vernon settlement and is directly associated with important events of the period" and under Criterion C of that context as a property "that displays vernacular building techniques and traditional building materials, such as locally produced brick and locally quarried stone." The Knott House is also significant under Criteria A and C of the "Mt. Vernon Local Brick Building" context as a property that has "associations with settlement patterns," and "that contribute[s] markedly to the distinctive architectural character of Mount Vernon" through its "wall covering of locally produced brick" and its Early Republic stylistic influences. The Knott House meets these registration requirements under both Criteria A and C of both historic contexts through its association with the Military Road and its role in the settlement of Mount Vernon, through its display of local building traditions and materials (i.e., locally quarried limestone and locally manufactured red-orange brick), and through the workmanship of the town's earliest masons. Built along the Military Road c.1857 on land platted in 1857 as Saxby's Addition to Mount Vernon, the house literally represents the early development of the town in its nascent years. The Knott House dates from the founding of the community and retains sufficient integrity to be considered significant to understanding Mount Vernon's development. The period of significance for the Knott House is c.1857 to 1870, from the year the Knotts likely built the house to the end of the period of significance for the "Military Road-era Buildings, Structures, and Objects, c.1840-70" context of *Historic Resources of Mt. Vernon, Iowa* Multiple Property Submission.

This property is one of a group of 11 historic brick houses in Mount Vernon being nominated under the *Historic Resources of Mt. Vernon, Iowa* Multiple Property Submission in 2019.

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

 (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

(Iowa SHPO Additional Instructions: For properties not nominated under Criterion D, include a statement about whether any archaeological remains within or beyond the footprint of the property were assessed as part of this nomination under the subheading **Archaeological Assessment**.)

#### **Criterion A: Historical Significance of the Adams R., Frederick L. and Martha (Taylor) Knott House**

Under the registration requirements for Criterion A of the "Military Road-Era Buildings, Structures, and Objects, c.1840-1870" context, the Adams R., Frederick L. and Martha (Taylor) Knott House is a property "that illustrate[s] the effect the Military Road had on Mount Vernon settlement and is directly associated with important events of the period" (Long 1991:F2). According to the description of the significance of this property type:

Significant properties call attention to the establishment of the Military Road and illustrate the effect the route had on settlement in the Mount Vernon area. The Military Road was a key ingredient in fostering area settlement. Significant examples reveal an important architectural period and building tradition in Mount Vernon. Through their use of local building materials, these resources show how early settlers took advantage of natural resources to provide shelter during the Military Road era. They also represent the effects of a specific period of local efforts to capitalize on the presence of a major transportation route, the Military Road. Finally, significant properties illustrate a specific and influential period, the early settlement of Mount Vernon. In short, they date from the founding of the community.

Surviving properties from this pivotal period in the history of the community are so rare that examples from prominent building types, such as houses, that retain sufficient integrity are considered significant to understanding Mount Vernon's development (Long 1991:F2).

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Under the registration requirements for Criterion A of the "Mt. Vernon Local Brick Building, c.1840-93" context, the Knott House is also a property that has "associations with settlement patterns" although the primary significance for this context is under Criterion C (Long 1991:F4). According to the description of the significance of this property type:

Although their significance is primarily architectural, many examples also call attention to the early settlement period of Mount Vernon. Their construction is associated with the establishment of the Military Road around 1840 and they illustrate the effect the route had on settlement in the Mount Vernon area (Long 1991:F3-F4).

The Knott House illustrates this specific and influential period, not only as an example of a distinctive building tradition, but also as the home of Adams R. and Frederick L. Knott, prominent pioneer settlers and merchants. The Knotts came to Iowa from Ohio probably in the late 1840s, first settling in Cedar Co, then in Tama County,<sup>4</sup> and moving from there to Mount Vernon in 1854. The Knott family consisted of Richard C. and Mary Ann (Adams) Knott and their three sons: Frederick L., Abraham R., and Adams R. Knott<sup>5</sup> (US Census 1850, 1860; Iowa State Census 1854, 1856; *Iowa, Select Marriages Index, 1758-1996*). In 1854, Frederick L. Knott, his family, and Adams R. Knott moved to Mount Vernon in 1854 and the following year the brothers purchased the building and dry goods store of early pioneer merchant Oliver Day. By 1859, Abraham Knott had joined his brothers in the dry goods business, styling themselves Adams Knott & Co., which was considered "one of the principal merchants" of Mount Vernon (Iowa State Census, 1854; *MVH*, April 6, 1900; *Dubuque Daily Times*, June 1, 1859) (Figure 12). In 1856, Frederick, Martha, and Ida (infant), and Adams Knott were sharing a household, with their store clerk as a boarder. In 1857, the Knotts purchased lots 7 and 8 of Block 12 in the newly platted Saxby's Addition to Mount Vernon and soon after hired builders to erect a two-story brick house on what would become A Avenue (Iowa State Census 1856; Abstract of Title) (Figure 13). According to Geraldine Hughes, a later owner of the house:

The Knott men were enterprising citizens of this community, a father and two sons. All of these men signed their names to the petition of incorporation of this town in 1869. It was the Knotts who built this house (Geraldine Hughes, quoted in *Lisbon Sun and Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye Record Herald*, July 22, 1976).<sup>6</sup>

By 1860, three generations of the Knott family were living in Mount Vernon, and F.L., Martha, and A.R. Knott were living together in the brick house (US Census 1860). Oral history suggests that the Brackett family lived as renters or boarders in this house in 1861 when it was reportedly related in Elisabeth Ford's book, *No Hour of History* that "little Edgar Brackett concealed his two-year old sister, Clara, under the chintz valance of a daybed, while five Indians, who had bolted the front door, were interesting themselves in pulling feathers out of the tail of the family's pet parrot" (The Centennial Committee 1948). It was in 1861 that the partnership of Adams Knott & Co. dissolved, with a notice of the dissolution printed in the *Mount Vernon News* in March of that year.<sup>7</sup> It may be that the Bracketts were renting the house, or a portion thereof, since the Knotts were going through hard times, or during the period when the Knotts were selling the house, which occurred that same year. The property then passed through several hands but was never owned by the Brackett family (Property abstract for 417 A Avenue SE).

<sup>4</sup> Frederick L. Knott married Martha Taylor in Tama County in 1853. See *Iowa, Select Marriages Index, 1758-1996*.

<sup>5</sup> Adams R. Knott, the youngest of the three Knotts, is especially difficult to find in the historical record, is often confused with his brother Abraham R. Knott, the Civil War captain, and is even identified in his death notice in the *Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye* (November 22, 1872) as the brother of the much older Richard C. Knott, who was almost certainly his father.

<sup>6</sup> Again, Hughes named only two Knott brothers: F.L. and Abraham R. ("A.R.") Knott. Adams Knott, who also went by "A.R.," seems to have disappeared from Mount Vernon during the Civil War and was living elsewhere when the petition for incorporation was signed in 1869. Adams Knott died "somewhere in Illinois" in 1872 (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*, November 1, 1872). By then, the families of F.L. Knott, Abraham R. Knott, and their aging parents had moved to Kansas after losing everything when their second steam flouring mill burned down (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*, August 19, 1898).

<sup>7</sup> In 1862, Abraham R. Knott "enlisted as a volunteer, helped to raise and organize what later became Company H, 24th Iowa volunteer Infantry" and "was chosen by his company as 1st Lieutenant." Knott later became captain, "a position he held until mustered out at the close of the war" (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*, August 19, 1898).



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<p><b>SECOND EDITION!</b> <b>ADAMS KNOTT &amp; CO</b> <b>TRADE NOTICE.</b></p> <p>Our numerous patrons will please accept our sincere thanks, with a few scattering regrets, for the very liberal and steady patronage bestowed upon us in the past, and allow us to say here, there shall be no pains spared in the future to make it to your interest to continue, and others to join you, and buy your goods of ADAMS KNOTT &amp; Co. We ask not much of profits, but will venture to predict that the worst is past</p> <p><b>A GOOD TIME COMING.</b> and more thankful hearts two years hence. In the mean-time we wish to keep it before the people that we have a very extensive stock of</p> <p><b>SUMMER DRY-GOODS</b> and are weekly receiving large orders direct from NEW YORK, which makes our stock one of THE LARGEST IF NOT THE LARGEST, and the best selected in Linn County, and too meet the wants of the people of Mt. Vernon and surrounding country.</p>	<p>We buy our goods as cheap and sell as low (pay being equal, money is worth its hire) as any sane man dare to sell. In short, we challenge competition.</p> <p><b>NEW GOODS! NEW GOODS!</b> piles upon piles, heaps upon heaps, LOTS OF EM! Just received, now ready and for sale cheap, consisting of Dry Goods; almost every description, Casimers Cloths, Ready made Clothing, CARPETS, BOOTS SHOES, HATS CAPS, BONNETS, TRIMMINGS, RIBBONS AND PARISOLS, a great variety of Capes Silk-lace, Mantilias, Silk Mantilias, Silk-lace points duster, Manilia and L. valla capes, GROCERIES, FISH DRIED FRUIT, Hard-ware, Queens-ware, Glass-ware, Plows, Shovel Plows, constantly on hand and for sale cheap. Farmers bring on your Produce, for which we will give you the highest market price.</p> <p><b>N. B. MONEY NOT REFUSED.</b></p>
--	--

Figure 12. Advertisement for Adams Knott & Co., Mount Vernon. Source: Mount Vernon News, August 31, 1860

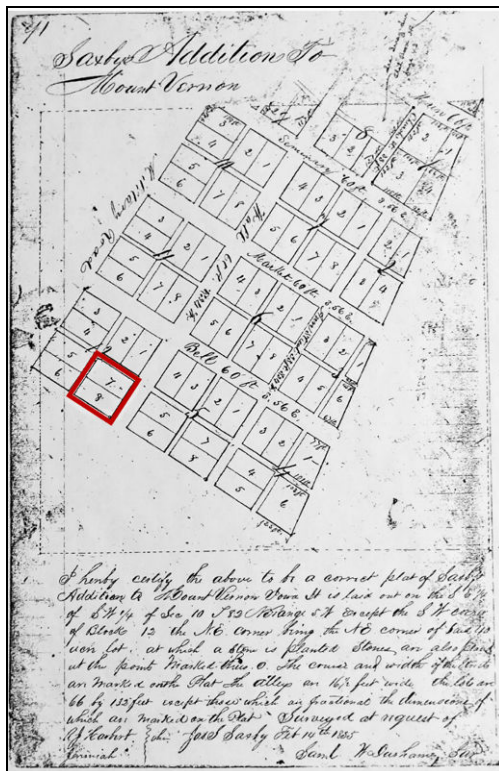


Figure 13. Plat of Saxby's [First] Addition to Mount Vernon, 1855, showing the lots where the Knott House was built c.1857. Source: Plat Book K, Linn County Recorder's Office, Cedar Rapids

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In 1868, the house was purchased by Franklin W. Hart, a bachelor, who shared the brick house with his widowed mother, Emeline Hart, who occupied "a room in the second story" (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*, August 24, 1877). Hart had served in the Civil War, graduated from Cornell College in 1869, and then studied law. He served as city assessor and city trustee (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye and Lisbon Herald*, March 19, 1925). In the early 1870s, however, his main occupation was nursery dealer. A profile of Hart's business in the *Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye* in 1875 described it thus:

F.W. Hart is an extensive dealer in all kinds of Nursery stock, which he takes great care to have true to name. His trees and shrubbery have given good satisfaction and his sales are rapidly increasing every year. Farms in Linn county will consult their own interests by buying their supplies of Mr. Hart as he gives the subject his personal attention and is a reliable dealer (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*, April 16, 1875).

Where Hart's Mount Vernon nursery was located is unknown, but he traveled extensively throughout Iowa, particularly western Iowa, tending to his business and customers (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*, July 12, 1878). In 1881, Hart was nominated and elected to serve as Linn County Representative in the 19th Iowa Legislature and almost certainly would have been reelected had he not decided to move to Harrison County. In 1883, Hart sold the house and moved to his "well stocked farm" in Harrison County, Iowa. The initial and subsequent sales, however, fell through, but Hart finally sold the house in 1888 to "Evangelist" James and Jessie N. Hughes (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*, March 23, 1883; April 20, 1883; May 1, 1885; September 21, 1883). James Hughes, a self-trained minister, had come to Mount Vernon to attend Cornell College. According to the *Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*:

James Hughes was always devoted to the church and he became a minister early in life. Feeling his lack of a higher training, he came to Mt. Vernon and entered Cornell from which he graduated in 1894, receiving the degree of A.B. Later he awarded by a degree of A.M. After doing post graduate work at Garrett Biblical Institute, he received a B.Ph. degree also. Rev. Hughes served the following churches as pastor, Brooking City, S. Dak.; Scotland, S.Dak.; Schaller and Odebolt, Iowa. He then attended Cornell and was subsequently made pastor at Sanborn, Iowa, and also conference evangelist of the Northwest Iowa conference (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*, March 2, 1922).

When Rev. James Hughes died in 1922, he was serving as pastor of the Methodist church at Ronan, Montana, and his wife Jessie N. Hughes died in 1947. Their daughter Geraldine Hughes inherited the property and lived there until 1975 (*Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye*, March 2, 1922; Abstract of Title).

After 1947, the house was owned by single female members of the Hughes family until 1995 and during which time rooms were rented out to young women, many of whom were students at Cornell College. When Jessie Hughes Downie sold the property on contract to William E. Kettlecamp (the legal transfer of the Warranty Deed did not occur until 1998 between Downie and Kettlecamp). The Kettlecamps did not live in this house but they did rehabilitate the building, including repointing the exterior masonry. They sold the property to Elizabeth Anne Isenberg Helfgott in 1998, with Helfgott retaining possession until 2002 when it was sold to Timothy and Gail Logan. From the Logans, it went to Joycelyn H. Wolfe (2005-2007), Benjamin Everett Apley and Annabelle Richardson Apley (2007-2016) and then to the current owners, Sarah H. and Roland W. Richardson in 2016.

### **Criterion C: Architecture of the Adams R., Frederick L. and Martha (Taylor) Knott House**

Under the registration requirements for Criterion C of the "Military Road-era Buildings, Structures, and Objects, c.1840-70" context, the Adams R., Frederick L. and Martha (Taylor) Knott House is a property "that displays vernacular building techniques and traditional building materials, such as locally produced brick and locally quarried stone" (Long 1991:F2). The Knott House is in fact a good representative example of the Military Road-era brick housing type in Mount Vernon, according to the description of the significance of this property type:

The houses for this property type are built of deep red-orange local brick. Rooflines vary and include gable-side (the dominant shape), gable-front, crossed-gable, upright-and-wing, mansard, and hipped.

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Later examples are more likely to be hipped and early examples tend to be gabled. Most are two-story. Foundations are of locally quarried limestone (generally rubble or roughly dressed). Some lintels and sills are also stone. Brick is sometimes used decoratively for cornices, cornice returns, and more elaborate lintels. With the earliest examples, the use of brick with simple details and form results in a simplicity that contributes markedly to the charm of the community. Good representative examples are: 113 and 201 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave N, 417 A Ave S, 224 1st St SW, 600 and 601 1st Ave S. Stylistic influences include Greek Revival, the principal influence), Italianate, and Gothic Revival. The earliest examples often exhibit no strong stylistic influence but have a Federal stylistic simplicity and arrangement (Long 1991:F3).

The Knott House is also significant under Criterion C of the "Mt. Vernon Local Brick Buildings, c.1840-93" context as a property "that contribute[s] markedly to the distinctive architectural character of Mount Vernon" through its "wall covering of locally produced brick" and its Early Republic stylistic influences. According to the description of the significance of the Local Brick Building property type:

Buildings of locally produced brick and stone are a key visual element defining the nature and character of Mount Vernon, and their primary area of significance is architectural. Because of the key visual importance of this property type, most examples from the period c. 1840-1893 which retain their integrity are likely to be significant.

Although their significance is primarily architectural, many examples also call attention to the early settlement period of Mount Vernon. Their construction is associated with the establishment of the Military Road around 1840 and they illustrate the effect the route had on settlement in the Mount Vernon area (Long 1991:F3-F4).

The Knott House is a vernacular two-story, side-gabled house with Early Republic influences. Its foundation is locally quarried limestone and its exterior walls are the deep reddish-orange locally-produced brick that is the hallmark of Mount Vernon's Military Road era housing (Figures 14 and 15). As Janet Dumbaugh observed in her survey of brick buildings in Mount Vernon in 1980, the early pioneers of Mount Vernon "depended on craftsmen to build their new dwellings, which usually reflected styles of homes from communities left behind." Not only were an "unusually high number of brick homes" built during the Military Road era, Dumbaugh notes, but also "a high proportion of settlers were from the Lancaster, Pennsylvania area" (Dumbaugh 1980:2).<sup>8</sup>

The Lancaster area is world famous for its brick domestic and barn architecture. The Dutch settlers in the early 1700s were ingenious in putting to use the native lime and muddy soils needed to make bricks. These same resources were available in the Mt. Vernon locale. Clay was easily extracted from the sides of the hills, limestone was plentiful, and the Cedar River banks supplied the sand. . . . The craftsmen of Mt. Vernon probably did not use pattern books and most certainly were not guided by city codes. They brought their skills and ideas with them and were limited to repeating the same designs with little variation until perhaps ten years later. These men usually built double brick walls with the bricks laid lengthwise in two parallel rows joined by crosswise bricks in various patterns. . . . Because of the resources available to make the bricks and the talented craftsmen from Pennsylvania it was natural and fortunate that Mt. Vernon should reflect this heritage (Dumbaugh 1980:2; 4).

The Knott House was built c.1857, during the time builders Henry D. and William D. Albright were active. Although it is unknown whether or not the Albrights built this house, their house designs likely influenced other builders in Mount Vernon, as similarities with other Albright houses are apparent. The Albright brothers were born and grew up near Hanover, Pennsylvania, which is near Lancaster. They arrived together in Mount Vernon in June 1852, attracted by the founding of Cornell College, and for the next few years they worked as brickmakers and builders for the college and the town's early settlers. The brothers are specifically known to have built Old Sem (1853) and College Hall (1856), the first buildings on the Cornell College campus, as well as the Henry D. Albright House, locally known as "First Brick," where Henry and his wife would reside for most of the rest of their lives (224 1st Street SW). According to Dumbaugh, all three buildings feature similarities in style, materials, and building methods:

<sup>8</sup> The Pennsylvania Dutch, also known as Pennsylvania Germans, are descendants of early German immigrants to Pennsylvania.  
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All are basically rectangular, with the entrance centrally located on the long side, and windows placed symmetrically beside the door on each side and in the same position on the second or more stories. It is still domestic architecture that has been adapted in the case of the college buildings, for another purpose.

The Home and College Buildings share another feature that seems to be quite a common feature in this era of vernacular design and that is the inverted square U of raised brick forming the lintel and extending a short way down the side of the window. . . (Dumbaugh 1980:5).

Although the Knott House displays differences from these known Albright-built buildings (particularly in the shape of the lintels), its façade greatly resembles the Albright-built E.D. Wain House with its front porch portico and second floor balcony. As with other houses of this antebellum period, the brick of the Knott House is set in the Common Bond pattern, in this case with every eighth row turned to form a tie between two rows of brick in a brick wall, creating a double wall. The double wall strengthened and supported the structure in addition to providing insulation and fire protection. William Albright may have supplied the needed building material – bricks and lime – from his brickyard at the bottom of the ridge on land just northwest of Mount Vernon Cemetery, however, other smaller brickmaking operations were active at the time as well. As Barbara Long notes: “By 1856 brickmaking was a considerable local industry. In her letters home Mrs. Benjamin Ford noted that her four boarders “are making brick and burning lime and they earn \$1.25 a day” (Dumbaugh 1980:12; Long 1991:E3).



**Figure 14. Photograph of the Knott House published in the Mount Vernon Centennial book in 1948.** The actual date of this photograph is not known. Note that the 2/2 “windows” visible on the gable end are storm windows covering the original 6/6 windows. **Source: Centennial Committee 1948**



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**Figure 15. Knott House in 1967, when it was owned by Geraldine Hughes. Again, note that the 2/2 “windows” on the first-story windows are storm windows covering the original 6/6 windows.**  
Source: Margaret N. Keyes Research Files, State Historical Society of Iowa – Iowa City

### ***Archaeological Assessment***

The potential for any prehistoric or historic archaeological remains within the property boundary was not assessed as part of the present National Register nomination. However, the large yard areas surrounding this house would have some potential for archaeological evidence of support features such as a well, cisterns, privies, and other outbuildings.

### ***Acknowledgements***

The completion of this nomination was made possible by the assistance of members of the Mt. Vernon Historic Preservation Commission, who compiled the floor plans, conducted on-site photography, conducted historic research, and reviewed the various drafts of the nomination. The property owners also assisted with the compilation of floor plans, photography, and historical materials and reviewed the draft versions of the nomination. The City of Mt. Vernon provided support for the project and cash match towards the grant.

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***Disclaimer***

The activity that is the subject of the National Register nomination has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

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Office of Equal Opportunity  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20204

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency



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Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** less than one

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>41.918915</u>	<u>-91.418872</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

---

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property is a parcel defined as Lots 7 & 8, Block 12 in Saxby's First Addition to Mount Vernon located at on the north side of A Avenue SE, third house southwest of the intersection with 4th Street SE. The north and south boundaries of the property are each 131 feet and the east and west boundaries are each 132 feet.

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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Adams R., Frederick L. and Martha (Taylor) Knott House at 417 A Avenue SE in Mount Vernon, Linn County, Iowa.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Jennifer A. Price, PhD/Consultant and Leah D. Rogers, Volunteer date March 1, 2020  
organization Price Preservation Research telephone (319) 594-9513  
street & number P.O. Box 5201 email jenniferprice1311@icloud.com  
city or town Coralville state IA zip code 52241

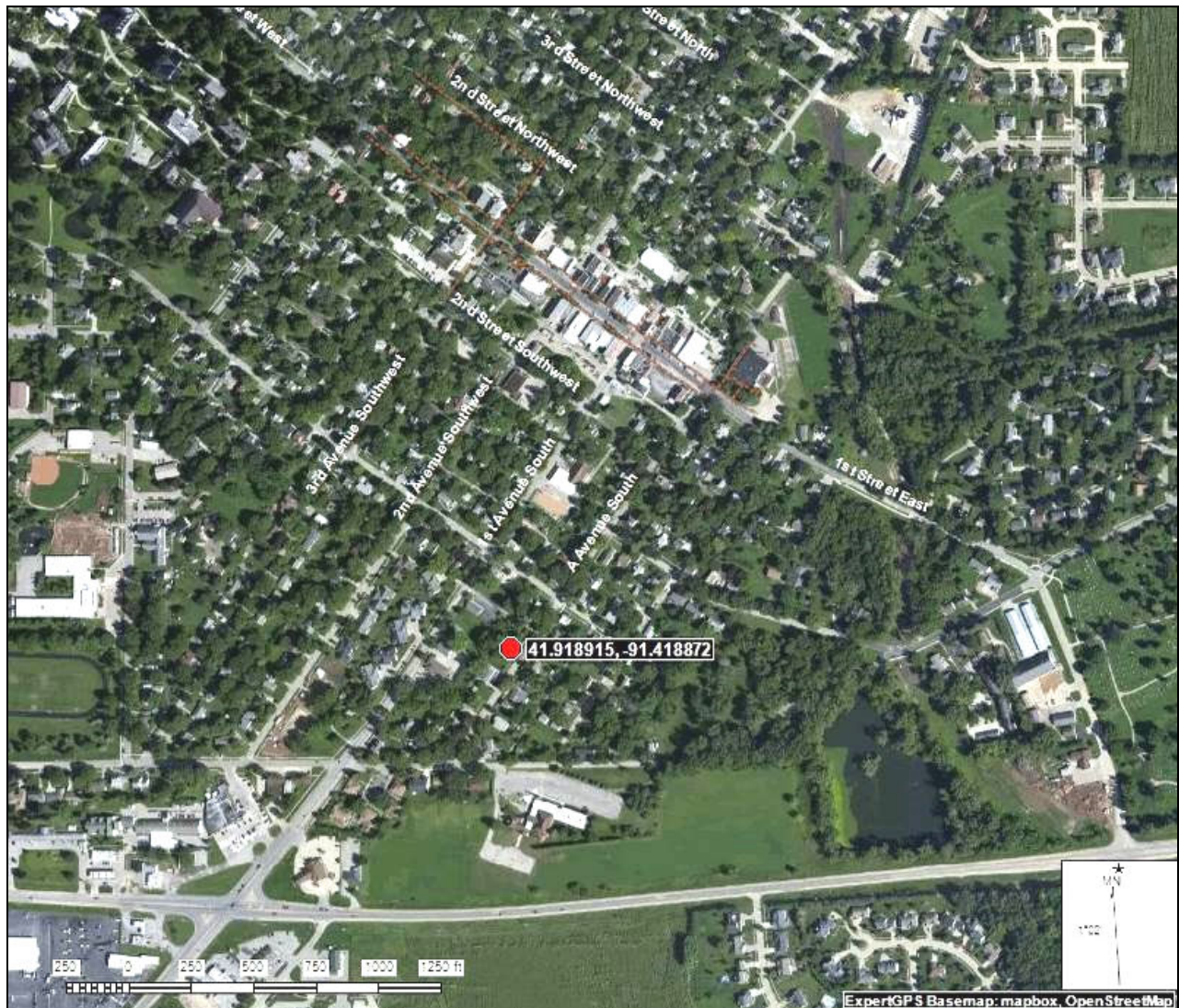
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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

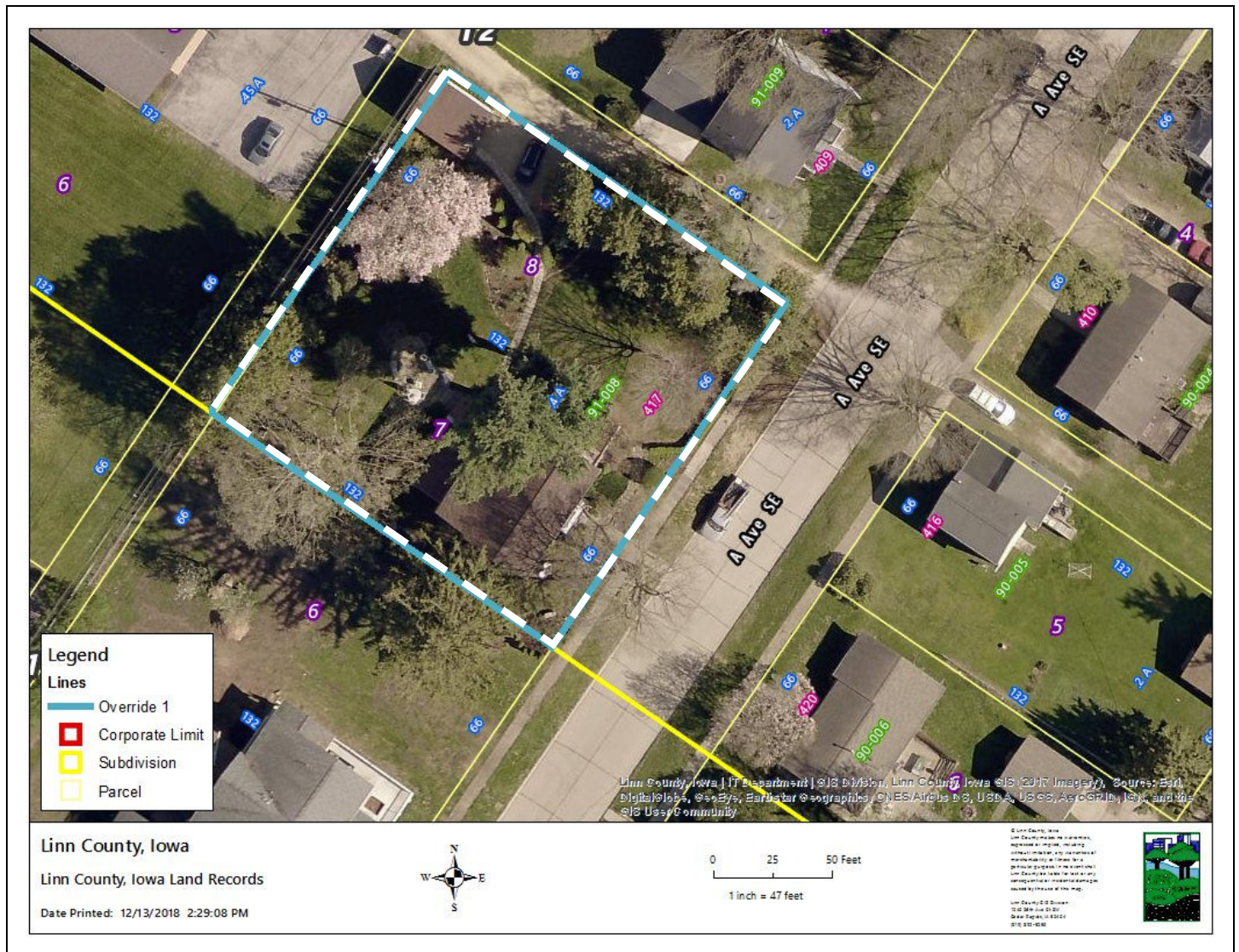


**Figure 16. GIS Location Map.**  
Aerial map obtained from ExpertGPS Pro Mapping Software, 2018.



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**Figure 17. Local Location Map (white dashed outline).  
Map obtained from Linn County Assessor, 2018.**



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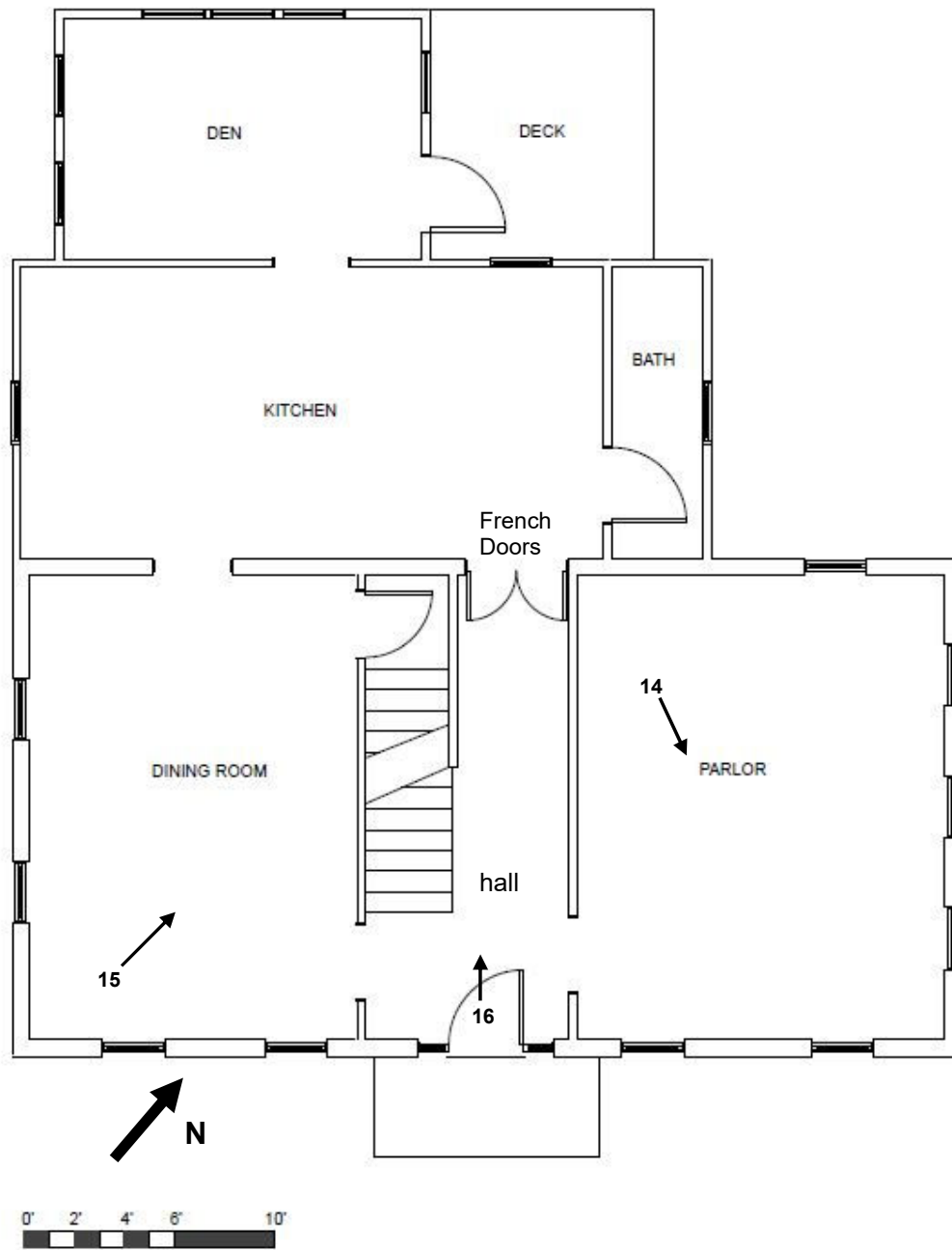
**Figure 18. Site Plan Map Showing NRHP Boundary of Knott House.**  
Aerial obtained from Linn County Iowa GIS website.

(white dashed outline = NRHP nomination boundary)



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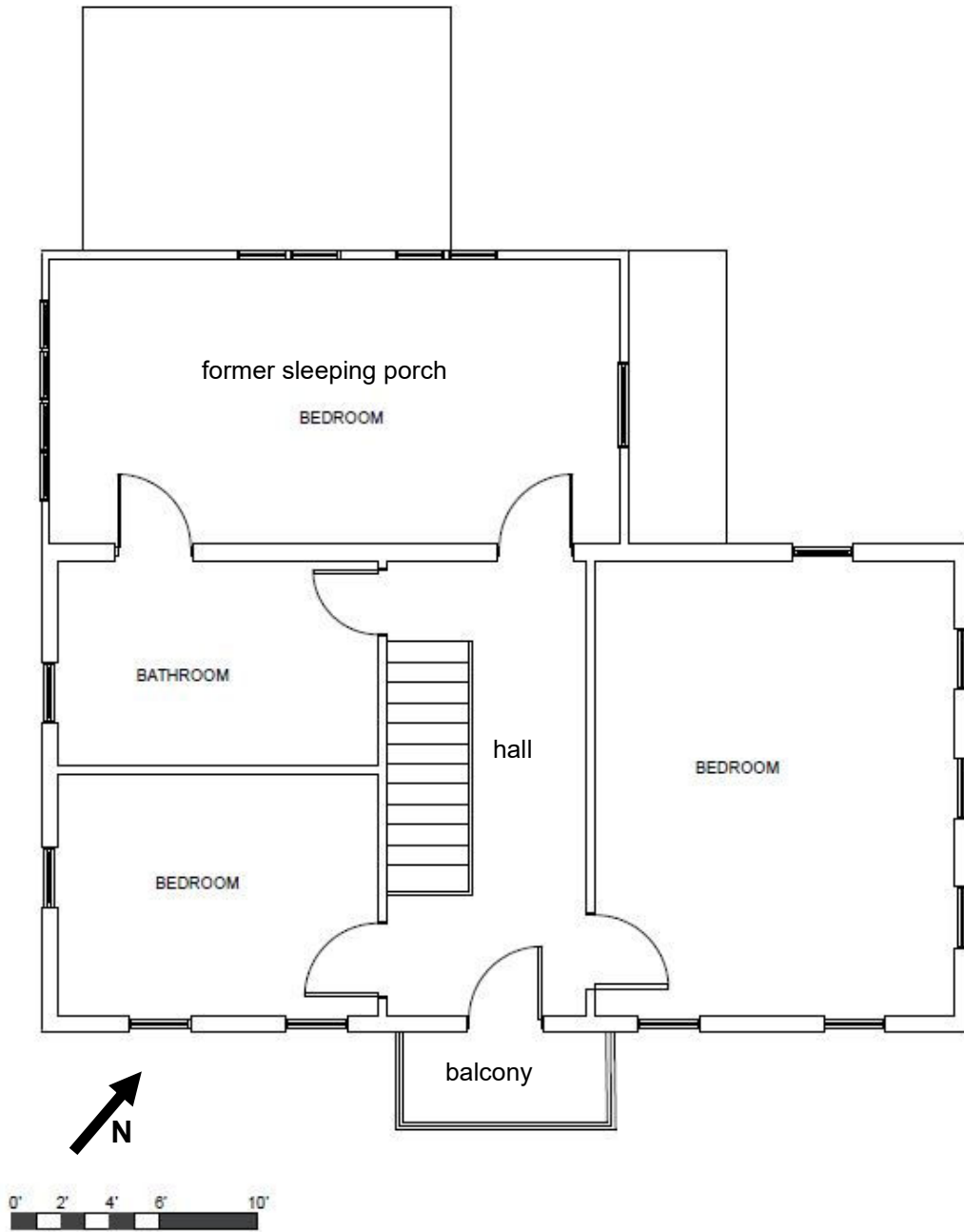
### 417 A Ave S - MAIN FLOOR

**Figure 19. Main Floor Plan and showing directions of photos #14--16**

Drawn by Ed Sauter, Mount Vernon, Iowa

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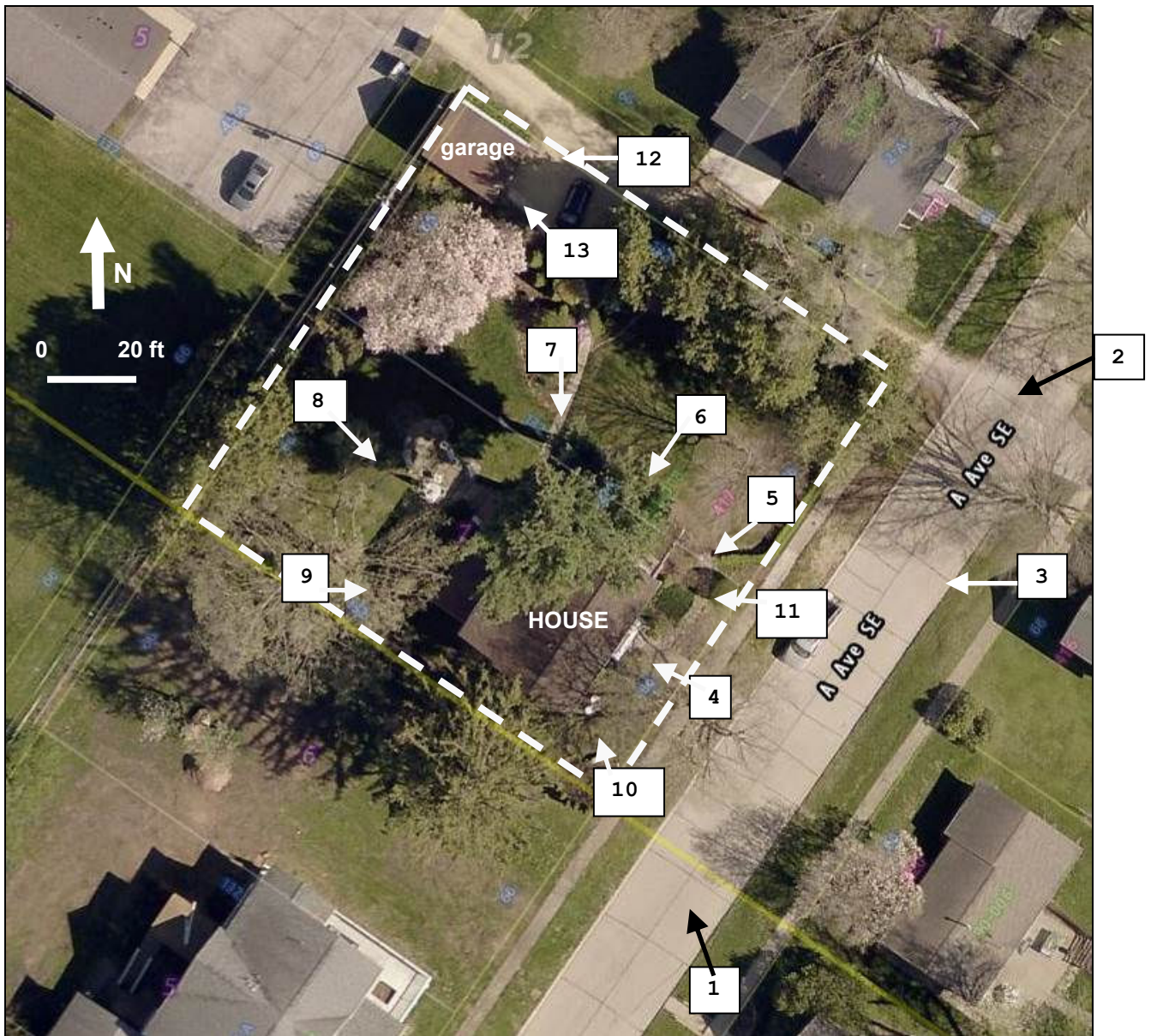
### 417 A Ave S - UPPER FLOOR

**Figure 20. Upper Floor Plan**

Drawn by Ed Sauter, Mount Vernon, Iowa

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**Figure 21. Site Plan Map showing direction of photographs #1-13.  
Aerial obtained from Linn County Iowa GIS website.**

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

**Name of Property:** Knott, Adams R., Frederick L. and Martha (Taylor), House  
**City or Vicinity:** Mount Vernon  
**County:** Linn County **State:** IA  
**Photographer:** Leah D. Rogers  
**Date Photographed:** March 30, 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 16: General view of Knott House looking NNW
- Photo 2 of 16: General view of Knott House looking SW
- Photo 3 of 16: General view of Knott House looking West
- Photo 4 of 16: Façade of Knott House looking WNW
- Photo 5 of 16: North side and façade of Knott House looking WSW
- Photo 6 of 16: North side of Knott House looking SW
- Photo 7 of 16: North side and rear of Knott House looking South
- Photo 8 of 16: Rear of Knott House looking ESE
- Photo 9 of 16: Rear and south side of Knott House looking East
- Photo 10 of 16: South side and façade of Knott House looking NNW
- Photo 11 of 16: North side and façade of Knott House looking West
- Photo 12 of 16: Barn/Garage looking West
- Photo 13 of 16: Barn/Garage looking WNW
- Photo 14 of 16: Interior of NE Parlor room looking SSE
- Photo 15 of 16: Interior of SE Dining room looking North
- Photo 16 of 16: Interior of Hallway and staircase to 2nd floor looking NNW

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.