



**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**  
*Melvin Carter, Mayor*

25 West Fourth Street, Ste. 1400  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6700  
Facsimile: 651-266-6549

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commissioners  
FROM: Christine Boulware, Historic Preservation Specialist  
RE: July 15, 2019 HPC meeting - NRHP Comment for the Dwight and Clara Watson House at 402 Hall Avenue  
DATE: July 8, 2019

Pursuant to the Heritage Preservation Commission's (HPC) Certified Local Government (CLG) responsibilities, attached is a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Nomination for the Dwight and Clara Watson House at 402 Hall Street in Saint Paul.

The HPC shall allow for public comment, and may also indicate their opinion as to whether the Dwight and Clara Watson House meets National Register Criterion C noted in the nomination.

Criterion C is applicable when the "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."

In order for the HPC to comment, at least one HPC member must meet the Federal Standards for architectural history, architecture or historic architecture (as defined in the state CLG procedures manual), and the member(s) must participate in formulating that opinion.

Commissioners Bezat, Justin, MacDonald, Nelson and Radford meet those Federal Standards and therefore are being asked to carefully review the nomination and prepare to state whether or not the nomination meets the criteria for which it is being nominated to the NRHP at the HPC meeting.

## BACKGROUND

On June 11, 2019, the Department of Planning and Economic Development received a letter from the State Historic Preservation Office requesting Certified Local Government on the nomination of the Dwight and Clara Watson House. Staff informed the Mayor's Office and the Ward 2 Office of the nomination and scheduled the review and public comment for the July 15, 2019 HPC meeting.

402 Hall Avenue was identified as the D.H. Weston [sic] House & Barn in the 1983 Historic Sites Survey of Saint Paul and Ramsey County (RA-SPC-1680). The association between the property and Cass Gilbert were not known at the time of the 1983 survey.

Dr. Mark S. Thomas has been the steward of the Dwight and Clara Watson House since making it his home in 1993. After his extensive research into the Watson family and research at the New York City archives by Tom Blanck was it discovered that the residence and barn were designed by Cass Gilbert.

## **HPC REVIEW AUTHORITY**

In 1985, Saint Paul's Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) became a Certified Local Government as established under the provisions of the "Guidelines of Implementation of Certified Local Government Programs in Minnesota" and of 36 CFR 61.5 and 36 CFR 61.7 as referenced in the Certified Local Government Agreement, MHS Agreement #85-C-1395.

In 1980, Congress amended the national historic preservation program to include a new legal basis for a new federal-state-local preservation partnership. This role of CLGs in the partnership is outlined in "Procedures for Applying for and Maintaining Certified Local Government Status." One of the roles identified is the CLG's responsibility for review and approval of nominations of properties to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) must notify the property owner, the HPC and the chief local elected official (Mayor) when properties are being nominated to the NRHP. Along with timelines for notification and review, the HPC must also allow for the public to comment. In order for the HPC to comment on whether the nomination meets the criteria in which it's being considered, the HPC must have members that meet the federal qualifications in the areas in which the property is being nominated for; classified as historic, archaeological, and/or architectural in nature. If the local HPC does not have the expertise in the area the HPC can choose not to comment or may obtain the opinion of a qualified professional.

The Mayor may also provide their recommendation along with the HPCs and those are forwarded to the SHPO prior to the State's recommendation that is sent to the Secretary of the Interior. If both the HPC and the Mayor recommend that a property not be nominated to the NRHP the SHPO will take no further action unless an appeal is filed.

## **CONSISTENCY WITH THE HERITAGE AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION CHAPTER OF THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2040)**

Recommending the Dwight and Clara Watson House be nominated to the NRHP with the appropriate criteria meets several goals outlined in the Heritage and Cultural Preservation Chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan (2040) that was approved by the City Council on June 19, 2019.

**Goal 2:** "The preservation of built, cultural and natural environments that express the identity and sense of place of Saint Paul."

**Policy HP-6.** "Maintain and preserve designated and determined eligible historic and cultural resources."

**Policy HP-7.** "Be proactive in the identification, evaluation, survey and designation of historic and cultural resources to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to preservation that is time-sensitive and responds to community needs."

The designation is also consistent with **The West Side Community Plan (2013):**

**HP2.5** "Evaluate properties based on historic contexts, reconnaissance surveys, and applicable designation criteria to determine their potential significance as well as their potential eligibility for designation as a heritage preservation site by the City and for listing on the National Register of Historic Places."

**HP2.6** "Forward properties that appear to be potentially eligible for listing on the NHRP to the SHPO for an official determination of eligibility."

**HP2.7** "Forward significant historic resources to the City (HPC) for designation as heritage preservation sites or historic districts."

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The Dwight and Clara Watson House and Barn and 402 Hall Avenue meets Criterion C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

**SUGGESTED MOTION:**

Per the information and documentation provided in the National Register nomination, the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission finds that the nomination meets Criterion C (architecture) for the period of significance (1886) and supports the listing of the Dwight and Clara Watson House at 402 Hall Avenue in the National Register of Historic Places.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Letter to HPC from SHPO
2. NRHP Nomination Form
3. Supplemental Photographs by owner
4. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

RECEIVED JUN 11 2019

Mr. Michael Justin, Chair  
St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission  
25 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 1400 CHA  
St. Paul MN 55102

Re: Certified Local Government Comment on the nomination of: **Watson, Dwight and Clara, House, 402 Hall Street, St. Paul, Ramsey County** to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mayor Carter:

The above referenced property may be considered by the State Historic Preservation Review Board for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places on August 20, 2019. Because the City of St. Paul has been granted Certified Local Government (CLG) Status under the provisions of 36 CFR 61.5 and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office's "Procedures for Applying For and Maintaining Certified Local Government Status," the nomination (copy enclosed) is being sent to the Office of the Mayor and to the Heritage Preservation Commission for review at this time.

This nomination is classified as an architectural nomination. After allowing a reasonable opportunity for public comment, the Commission may prepare a report indicating its opinion as to whether the property meets the National Register Criteria (copy enclosed). At least one Commission member who meets the Federal Standards for Historic Architecture or Architectural History (see Appendix A of the state CLG procedures) should participate in formulating that opinion.

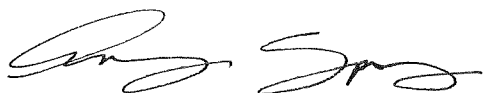
If the Heritage Preservation Commission does not include a member who meets the Federal Standards, the city may choose not to comment on this nomination through the CLG review process (in which case please advise the Preservation Office of that choice), or the Heritage Preservation Commission may obtain the opinion of a qualified professional in the subject area and consider the opinion in its recommendations. The comment must include both the credentials and opinion of the consulted professional. If the city chooses not to comment under the CLG process outlined above, comments on a nomination may be submitted to the Preservation Office in as much as any interested party may submit comments.

The Mayor may transmit the report of the Heritage Preservation Commission together with his comments on the eligibility of the property to Amy Spong, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, 50 Sherburne Ave., Suite 203, St. Paul, MN 55102. This response must be received before the close of business on Friday, August 20, 2019. Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, if both the Heritage Preservation Commission and the Mayor determine that the property does not meet the criteria, the nomination will not be further considered unless an appeal is filed with the state office.

We should note that the standard notification of SHPRB consideration of this property has been sent to the owner. Appropriate officials will be notified approximately one month before the scheduled meeting.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Spong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Spong".

Amy Spong  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

enc.: National Register Program  
National Register Criteria  
Copy of National Register Nomination

cc: Mr. Mark Thomas  
402 Hall Street  
St. Paul, MN 55107

**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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Watson, Dwight and Clara, House

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 402 Hall Street

City or town: St. Paul State: Minnesota County: Ramsey

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

## 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

<p>_____</p> <p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	<p>_____</p> <p><b>Date</b></p>
---	---------------------------------

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p><b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Title :</b></p>	<p>_____</p> <p><b>Date</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

---

#### 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

---

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

---

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling



Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/eclectic

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD (clapboard, shingles)  
STONE (limestone)

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the 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.)

---

### Summary Paragraph

The Dwight and Clara Watson House is a two-and-a-half-story, hip-roofed, wood-frame residence. It stands at the southeast corner of Hall Avenue and Delos Street, occupying Lots 1 and 2 of Block 32 of the West St. Paul Proper addition to the City of St. Paul (see Additional Items, Figures 1, 2 and 3). The main part of the Watson House is approximately 30' in all dimensions, with a protruding porch in the front that wraps the southwest corner and a kitchen and summer kitchen wing at the rear. A large 16' x 28' barn lies immediately east of the house. Stylistically the property is eclectic in the distinctive manner of its architect, Cass Gilbert, marrying his first European experiences and work for McKim, Mead and White to his love of invention in detail and composition. Exterior and interior of the house retain a high degree of integrity, as it appears very much like Gilbert's original office drawings in plan, design, and materials. The only significant addition is early and consonant with Gilbert's design: a widening of the front porch beyond the south wall. A small summer kitchen was appended to the rear. Comprehensive restoration of the house and barn, also of Gilbert's design, in 1998-2000 removed siding overlays, restored trim that had been damaged or removed, inserted two windows to illuminate dark secondary spaces in the house, and blocked off the carriage entry that faced the house after the barn's rotation on the lot. The movement of the vehicular entry and the resiting and rotation of the barn render it a noncontributing property.

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

## Narrative Description

The property on which the Watson House stands was platted in 1856 as part of West St. Paul. In 1974, the City of St. Paul incorporated West St. Paul as the West St. Paul addition. The division began to fill in the early 1880s, when it became popularly known as the West Side. A rugged, elevated terrain high above the Mississippi and a large surviving remnant of oak savanna were both an attraction and a deterrent to early settlers. By 1885, Block 32 was one of the few blocks in its area without a house, but much of the early 1880s building was ephemeral. However, several extant houses close to the Watson house preceded it, one of them across Hall Avenue (then Hall Street) and two across Delos Street.<sup>1</sup>

Two geographical factors impeded development of the West Side area that the Watson House occupies. First was the broad flood plain distancing it from the Mississippi River and Downtown St. Paul. Second was the steep rise of the bluff on which it stands above the flood plain. Until 1886 the Wabasha Street Bridge was the only crossing, and the road leading from the bridge into the West Side (known first as Bridge Street, then as Dakota) terminated at the base of the bluff with little more than a wagon trail veering around the east side of it. On the top of the bluff stood the choicest lots, but they could be accessed only by a difficult, roundabout route from the east and west.

The population boom of the mid-1880s finally brought the West Side to life. In 1886, a new bridge was built over the Mississippi, extending Robert Street across the river and creating a north-south artery through the West Side. At the same time, Isabel Street was cut through from the bluff down onto Wabasha Street, opening up the now desirable real estate at the head of the bluff (see Additional Items, figure 3). Real estate dealer Dwight Watson was among the first to capitalize on the development, building his house on a block bordered by Isabel. It was the first architect-designed residence within a radius of several blocks. Its most prominent neighbors are an 1891 Queen Ann house catcorner from it on Hall and Delos and the ca. 1891 Octavius Beal House just south of it, the latter being the only other Victorian-era building on its block. By the time of the latter's construction, nearly all the lots at the top of the bluff around the Watson House had been developed.<sup>2</sup>

Cass Gilbert, the architect of the Watson House, clearly took into account the geographical setting when laying out the elevations. A noticeable feature of the house is the elaboration of its south side, departing from the usual practice of emphasizing the two street elevations. Delos Street, running east-west on the north side of the lot, terminated a block east of the house and therefore engaged only the traffic of nearby residents, while Isabel Street south of the lot was already a major artery up the bluff and gave carriage riders a clear view of the entire south elevation of the house on the otherwise bare block (photo no. 2).

The main part of the Watson House is nearly cubical in general dimension, measuring 30'-0" in width, 28'-6" to 29'-8" in depth (excluding the front porch and kitchen/bedroom wing), and approximately 30' in height from street elevation grade to the highest roof ridge. A screen porch projects from the south end of the front (west) elevation and a kitchen-bedroom wing projects out the back (east). Originally open and nearly square in plan, the front porch juts forward 9'-2" from the main block of the house. The east wing is L-shaped, extending 11'-4" on the north and 10'-2" on the south to fill out a jog in the plan of the main

(see continuation sheets)

<sup>1</sup> *Sanborn Atlas*, v. 2, 1885, p. 49, and the panoramic map *St. Paul, Minnesota 1883*. That latter is the only accurate pre-1887 depiction of actual street layouts, as the earlier plat maps all show streets running through unexcavated hillsides.

<sup>2</sup> The Watson and Beal houses are first shown in 1891 in *Rascher's Atlas of St. Paul*, v.4, p. 351-352.

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

## 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.)

- 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

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1886  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1886  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Gilbert, Cass  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

**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 Dwight and Clara Watson House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its local significance as the work of a master architect. Its period of significance is 1886, the first year of Cass Gilbert's partnership with James Knox Taylor. Gilbert was one of the leading architects of his generation. His St. Paul designs for the Endicott Building and the Minnesota State Capitol earned him widespread accolades, the latter paving the way for his garnering of major East Coast commissions and his move to and rise to prominence in New York City. However, his early years in practice were largely devoted to designing houses of modest size and cost, and he made the most of the opportunity. For the best of these, he poured his creative resources into vigorous surface compositions and a wealth of imaginative detail, often working within the stricture of a cost-effective, basically cubical form. Three early frame residences captured with particular clarity the signature elements of his developing eclectic sensibility. The Dwight and Clara Watson house is the only one to survive.

---

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Cass Gilbert was born in Zanesville, Ohio in 1859, the eldest son of respected government surveyor Samuel Gilbert and Elizabeth Wheeler Gilbert. Following the lead of a surveying assignment and in hopes of arresting the onset of Samuel's tuberculosis, the family moved to St. Paul in 1868. Although Samuel died within a year, his surveying work and his many professional connections profoundly influenced Gilbert's early career path. After completing the 8th grade in 1873, Cass worked for a private surveyor to support his family. By 1876, he was at work in the architectural office of Abraham Radcliffe, the city's most prominent architect. Radcliffe's office was the training ground for many of St. Paul's architects of the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>6</sup>

While in Radcliffe's office, Gilbert formed a close friendship with Clarence Johnston and James Knox Taylor, two other teenagers with equal ambition and idealism. The three planned to further their training with a stint at MIT, though only Taylor completed the two-year course. Gilbert attended for one school year in 1878-79, then dropped out in the conviction that European travel and the knowledge and portfolio that came out of it would put him in a better position professionally than an architectural degree. Using his savings, a small stipend from his inheritance, and a loan from his mother, he left for Europe in January 1880, returning in August.<sup>7</sup>

(see continuation sheets)

---

<sup>6</sup> The experience in Radcliffe's office (1876-1878) doubtlessly enhanced Gilbert's chances of being admitted to MIT, although wages too low to support his family impelled his return to surveying work in the summer of 1878.

<sup>7</sup> For a more complete account of the youthful relationship between Gilbert and Johnston, see Paul Clifford Larson, *Minnesota Architect* (Afton Historical Society Press: Afton, MN., 1996), 6-7. Gilbert's first European venture is documented and interpreted in Larson, *Cass Gilbert Abroad* (Afton Historical Society Press: Afton, Minn., 2003).

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

(see continuation sheets)

---

### 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
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: New-York Historical Society

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** RA-SPC-1680

---

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreege of Property** .32

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |              |                    |                       |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15T | Easting: 493,188 m | Northing: 4,975,587 m |
| 2. Zone:     | Easting:           | Northing:             |
| 3. Zone:     | Easting:           | Northing:             |
| 4. Zone:     | Easting :          | Northing:             |

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

From the SE corner of Hall Av. and Delos St., east 150 feet, then south 93 feet, then west to Hall Av., then north to Delos St. the place of the beginning.

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

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

This boundary encompasses the property historically associated with the Watson House.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Paul C. Larson  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 1400 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
city or town: Keosauqua state: Iowa zip code: 52565  
e-mail historyhere@gmail.com  
telephone: 319 288-0776  
date: February 27, 2019

---

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)



Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, 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: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

house viewed from west, west elevation, camera facing east  
1 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

house viewed from southwest, west and south elevations, camera facing northeast  
2 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

house viewed from southeast standing by barn, south and east elevations, camera facing northwest  
3 of 14

Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

house viewed from north, north elevation, camera facing south  
4 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

house detail viewed from west-northwest, west elevation, camera facing southeast  
5 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

house detail viewed from south, south elevation, camera facing north  
6 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

house detail viewed from south, south elevation, camera facing north  
7 of 14

Dwight and Clara Watson House

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

Name of Property

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

house detail viewed from south, south elevation, camera facing north  
8 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

barn and house on Delos Street viewed from northeast, east and north elevations, camera facing southwest  
9 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Paul Clifford Larson  
Date of photograph: November 2012  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

barn viewed from northwest, north and west elevations, camera facing southeast  
10 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Griffin Larson  
Date of photograph: January 2018  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

front parlor viewed from southeast corner of parlor, camera facing northwest  
11 of 14

Dwight and Clara Watson House

Ramsey, Minnesota  
County and State

Name of Property

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Griffin Larson  
Date of photograph: January 2018  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

main hall and front staircase viewed from dining room, camera facing west  
12 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Griffin Larson  
Date of photograph: January 2018  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

dining room viewed from downstairs bedroom ("chamber"), camera facing south  
13 of 14

Name of Property: Dwight and Clara Watson House  
City: St. Paul  
County: Ramsey  
State: Minnesota  
Photographer: Griffin Larson  
Date of photograph: January 2018  
Location of original digital files: 1400 2nd St., Keosauqua, IA 52565

rear stairs from second floor, camera facing southeast  
14 of 14

**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.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Dwight and Clara Watson House

Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

part of the house. An open kitchen porch in the re-entrant angle at the northeast corner brings the north side of the first-story wall of the wing flush with the north wall of the house. Like the front porch, it rests on stone piers. Beyond the east wing is a shed-roofed summer kitchen added the year after the rest of the house was completed. It is not shown on Gilbert's surviving plans. The north wall of this addition retreats several feet behind the north wall of the remainder of the house (for Gilbert's drawings of plans and elevations of the house, see Additional Items, figures 4-9).<sup>3</sup>

Like virtually all pre-1910 residences in St. Paul, the house rests on a Platteville limestone foundation, the nearest quarry being the site of St. Matthew's School three blocks to the south. The exposed part of the foundation is composed of limestone ashlar laid up in five to six courses, depending on the grade. The original elevation drawings called for brick quoining of all outside foundation corners as well as around the basement windows, but this unusual detail was executed consistently only on the south elevation.

Of wood frame construction, the Watson House displays a great variety of facing materials. Immediately above the foundation is a wide skirt and projecting water table overlying the rim joists and running the entire perimeter of the house. The water table was shorn off when the house was sheathed in cement asbestos siding in 1958 but has been restored to an approximation of its original profile. Above the water table on the north and west elevations is a 2'-6" expanse of drop siding topped by a simple molding and a continuous sill matching the water table. Drop siding, molding, and sill were all significantly damaged by rot and truncation for the application of cement-asbestos siding, calling for their replication with new materials in 2010. The remainder of the house is sheathed in narrow clapboards with a ca. 4" exposure, the clapboard running all the way down to the water table on the front porch and south and east elevations. All but the gable walls terminate in a broad frieze. A few small areas noted below are clad in shingles.

The main square of the house is capped with a hipped roof with slightly swayed cornices. A broad gable projects from the south side, a small hipped gable rises from the west side, and a secondary hipped roof projects over the kitchen on the east side. Composition shingles cover the roof, a replacement of the original cedar shingles that were covered over then removed many years ago.

Each side of the house is distinctively treated in fenestration, ornamentation, and the achievement of balance and symmetry. In the front (west) elevation, a broad parlor window and transom light is centered between the porch and the north end (photo no. 1). These had been replaced with a pair of double hung windows in 1958 but have been restored to their original configuration. A second-story oriel and the attic dormer are centered on the outer walls, skewing them to the right of the parlor window beneath (photo no. 5). This oriel and dormer are the boldest decorative features of the exterior. Both are scaled appropriate to their function but carry an unusual degree of prominence because of the small scale of the house. In cross-section, the oriel projects three-sides of an octagon. At its base are curved clapboards forming a window breast. These are original materials, repaired and patched as necessary during restoration. The much-deteriorated pair of oriel window sashes was replaced in 1998 with sashes matching the original in appearance.

The dormer directly above the oriel approximately matches the latter in width. A triptych of identical window sashes is shaded by a hipped roof with the ridge pointing forward. The sides of the dormer and the area beneath the window are sheathed in cedar shingles, replacements matched to the defaced original material. During

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert's pen-and-ink-on-linen drawings of the Dwight and Clara Watson House are preserved in the New-York Historical Society's Cass Gilbert Collection. They include floor plans and elevations but lack detailed shop drawings.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page     2    

Dwight and Clara Watson House

Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

restoration, a shingled diamond pattern was inserted beneath the windows in conformity with Gilbert's office drawings.

The main entry porch at the southwest corner rests on stone piers rather than a continuous foundation wall. Centered on each pier are distinctively designed wood columns, square in section at the base but gradually expanding above the midpoint, creating the effect of a truncated Gothic arch for each opening (photo no. 1). This detail was replicated when the porch was enlarged to the south an additional 6' in 1909, causing it to protrude beyond the south wall. At the time of the porch addition, the original porch underwent its only significant alteration: replacement of an open balustrade by a beaded board parapet, providing the base for a screen enclosure (see Additional Items, figure 10). During restoration the parapet sheathing was replaced by shingle siding matching the wall shingling elsewhere.

The tympanum of the porch pediment is also sheathed in shingles rather than clapboards. At the horizontal midline of the tympanum, two courses of shingles are cut into a saw-tooth pattern now emphasized by red-oxide toned paint, creating a pattern of small connected squares set on their corner. The gable rakes are dressed with a custom compound cape molding. Both saw-tooth shingle pattern and cape molding survived the 1958 overlay sheathing of the house.

The south elevation is treated with a degree of elaboration equaling that of the front facade (photo no. 2). Several features set it off from the rest of the house. Most prominent among them are the horizontal divisions between the stories, which are clearly demarcated by two-foot cantilever marking the second story and a projecting apron between the second and third stories. The latter closes the broken pediment of the broad attic gable, its saw-tooth pattern creating an "ornament of shadow" revered by Gilbert and many of his contemporaries (photo no. 8). This pattern runs up the gable rakes as well. Rake ornament and moldings were discovered intact under the overlay siding, but the apron closing the pediment had been removed. Restoration brought back this latter detail in conformity with Gilbert's office drawings.

The fenestration of the south elevation is unusually varied and complex, some of it suggested by the floor plans but also once again a means for the architect to apply imaginative detailing. A pair of square clerestory windows lights the vestibule and entry hall respectively, the first of them concealed by the porch addition. The panel between the windows is divided into two rectangles, and this pattern is repeated in a second panel bridging the hall window with a pair of dining room windows (photo no 6). Both the square windows have a muntin pattern of a smaller square set on its corner and connected by its corners to the midpoint of the window sashes and rail. Gilbert made frequent use of this pattern in the design of leaded exterior as well as cabinetry windows for his larger houses of the ensuing decade. Square windows appear again in the attic, where they are set into a band of three (photo no. 7). McKim, Mead and White designed similar attic window triptychs during the time Gilbert worked for them, and it became a staple of Gilbert's early domestic designs. During restoration, a round-headed window was inserted into the wall just above the porch in order to illuminate the front staircase (photo no. 2).

Near-symmetry distinguishes the fenestration of the north elevation of the main body of the house, with three windows aligned above and below (photo no. 4). Their slightly irregular spacing expresses the plan of the rooms within, specifically the desire to have each room lit by two windows. As originally built, the front (westernmost) window of the second story was left out, as that was the area deemed most fitting for a bed. A remodeling in 1943 achieved balance by inserting a window matched to the others into the blank area. Fenestration of the kitchen and summer kitchen wings was composed in utilitarian fashion, with another second story window added to the bedroom above the kitchen during the 1943 remodeling, providing the smallest of the house's five bedrooms with its desired allotment of two windows. A 1936 remodeling enclosed Gilbert's original kitchen porch set into the re-

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

Dwight and Clara Watson House

Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

entrant angle of the northeast corner. This was corrected when restoration brought back the original plan with an open balustrade. The curvilinear form of the kitchen porch piers replicates those of the main entry porch.

The composition of the east elevation, terminating the utility wing at the rear of the house, remains intact but undistinguished by ornament or material detail (photo no. 3). Gilbert's single conceit was to vertically align the single windows on each floor both with each other and with the chimney above. However, the latter alignment is only visible from a raised or distant point of view. During restoration, a small square window illuminating the closet at the rear of the dining room was added at the re-entrant angle of the main block of the house and the kitchen wing. It matches the square windows Gilbert designed for the vestibule. The only other alteration to the fenestration was a basement window inserted in 1914 after removal of the cistern. The small, single story summer kitchen addition, protruding to the east and built after the remainder of the house was complete, was not in Gilbert's plans.

Minor remodelings in 1909, 1914, and 1943 left the main body of Gilbert's work intact. The 2000 restoration reversed the few conspicuous changes to the main (west and south) elevations, such as the treatment of the porch sheathing. Roof contours, cornices, wall sheathing and fenestration for all but the rear of the house appear as the architect designed them, with the exception of the window insertions already noted. An overlay of cement-asbestos shingles in 1958 required removal or shaving-down of some of the exterior trim. Damaged custom moldings and surface elaborations were restored in the 2000 rehabilitation, following the lead of surviving fragments and Gilbert's drawings. Some ornamental details shown in the original plans, such as the quoining of all the basement window surrounds and the dentilation of the front porch rakes, were never carried out and have been allowed to remain absent. Conversely, some of the original details, such as the diamond pattern in the porch tympanum, are not shown in Gilbert's drawings. In each case, restoration followed the lead of original construction rather than the stage of design expressed in Gilbert's office drawings.

The interior of the house retains the room partitions, casework, millwork, fireplaces, flooring, and ornamental flourishes of its original construction. Gilbert, like his mentor, Stanford White, applied his hand to much of the interior detailing, by and large using millwork with his distinctive profiles and proportions rather than off-the-shelf casework. As a local writer, possibly Gilbert himself, averred, "The result of so much pains and labor and skill is to produce complete harmony in proportion and design of all the parts and portions of the home outfit."<sup>4</sup>

Entry through the front porch and paneled Dutch doors reveals a small vestibule which yields to the "Main Hall". Gilbert's label for the latter reflects its place at the axial center of the plan rather than its dimensions. A reverse staircase to the second floor is on the left, and beyond it the doorway to the parlor. Straight ahead is the dining room, which leads to the downstairs bedroom ("chamber") and kitchen. Gilbert's detailing of the main hall belies its small size. Exterior doors, newel post, balustrade rail, and molded cap on the staircase wainscot are all original fabric and of Gilbert's design rather than being selected from common millwork stock (see photo 12).

Each of the rooms but the kitchen has original hardwood strip flooring. The most prominent feature of the parlor is a fireplace. Its iron and bronze cover, tile surround, and wood mantel and supporting columns are all original. On first glance the woodwork around the fireplace appears to be casework common to many houses of that era, but the molding profiles, like the molded door paneling and window casings throughout, are unlike the familiar stock casework of the day. As was common practice with Gilbert, they were likely of his design (see photo 11).

<sup>4</sup> "St. Paul Architecture," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 10, 1883. In letters written in the 1880s, Gilbert claimed he often wrote articles for the local papers and regional trade magazines, though none so far discovered were signed by name. That followed a common practice of signing a code name or a generic name such as "St. Paul Letter".

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

Dwight and Clara Watson House

Name of Property

Ramsey, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

A folding door at the southeast corner leads to the dining room. That room's most noticeable feature is a bay window at the southwest corner. The dining room lacks the extensive cabinetry common to many houses of its period. Doors to the kitchen and a closet are on the east wall. A door on the north wall leads to the first-floor bedroom ("chamber"), nearly square in plan and without detailing beyond the window and door moldings already noted (see photo 13).

The kitchen cabinetry is for the most part not original to the house. However much of the original scullery ("closet" in Gilbert's plans) cabinetry of beaded paneling remains in place. Gilbert specified the location of the shelving and bins but the cabinetry itself does not pick up on any of the millwork detailing elsewhere and was probably stock.

Second-story rooms remain as Gilbert planned them, except for the already noted windows added in 1943. As with the first-floor rooms, the flooring and millwork are original (see photo 14).

The only other property on the lot is a 16' x 28' barn immediately east of the house. Constructed in the same year as the residence, no known office drawings or other construction records have survived. However, the building permit lists dwelling and barn together, suggesting a common architectural source. The affinity of the design to that of the house and Gilbert's other barns also suggests that it came out of Gilbert's office (see photos 9 and 10).<sup>5</sup>

Gilbert's dozen barn and stable commissions between 1886 and 1894, four of them not associated with houses of his design, show his keen interest in that genre of building during his partnership with James Knox Taylor (1886-1891) and the early years of his return to solo practice. The Watson barn is the first of his twelve barn designs. It has many of the earmarks of his early work: tiered siding (in this case, clapboard and shingles), a gable pediment suggested by a slight projection of the shingle course bridging the base of the gable, and a novel interpretation of the Palladian gable triptych—in this case two small windows flanking a hay door.

Between 1909 and 1914, the barn was moved from its original location on the northeast corner of the lot to its current location directly east of the house. This required rotating the building 90°, which in turn demanded a new vehicular entry on the north side. Following many years of steady deterioration, the building was restored in 1998, some of its missing elements created in consonance with a 1914 photograph and Gilbert's manner and materials at play in the house. The major alteration was a blocking of the original carriage entrance, though the doors have been retained within the building. However circumspect this restoration, the restore point was 1914, not the building planned and sited by Gilbert, whose sole surviving and accessible documentation is its footprint in early city atlases. The resiting and reorientation of the building and the concomitant alteration both to its vehicular entry and to its relationship to the house are significant enough to prevent the barn from being a contributing building (see Additional Items, figures 1 and 2).

The exterior color scheme of both buildings—gold with deep red and muted green trim—is consonant with Gilbert's polychromatic combinations, particularly his frequent use of iron oxide pigments.

<sup>5</sup> Gilbert's name is uncharacteristically absent on the permit, so definite attribution is reliant on working drawings. It is quite possible that the plans for the barn survive among several rolls of renderings and working drawings that are unindexed and deemed too fragile for viewing in the New-York Historical Society's Cass Gilbert Collection.



**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

<u>Dwight and Clara Watson House</u> Name of Property
<u>Ramsey, Minnesota</u> County and State
 Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Gilbert failed to gain the foothold that he anticipated in a leading English architectural office. But he had a fallback plan: publication of several of his European sketches in the *American Architect*, the most respected and widely read architectural journal of its day. His sketches gained him the attention of the East Coast architectural community and garnered him his first architectural position, an apprenticeship with the renowned firm of McKim, Mead, and White. After three years of rising responsibilities but plateaued status in the firm, Gilbert returned to St. Paul to start his own practice. Several opportunities developed for him to combine what he had learned at McKim, Mead, and White with his memories and sketches of European travel. Many of those sketches were of the kind of monumental buildings to which he ultimately aspired, but interleaved with them were details such as doorways, towers, dormers and chimneys. These latter drawings became part of the working vocabulary of his early residential designs.

From 1883 to 1886, Gilbert worked in a solo practice with two or three draftsmen, occasionally drawing on the services of an architect with the engineering training that Gilbert lacked. He entered—and lost—numerous competitions for major civic and commercial buildings, having to settle for a couple churches, two small business blocks, and a number of modestly sized but finely detailed free-standing residences. He designed 19 of the latter, of which 14 or 15 were built. Only five remain, and four are in St. Paul. All of the latter are in the Historic Hill District (NRHP 1978) and the Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District of the City of St. Paul (1980, expanded in 1985 and 1990).<sup>8</sup>

Hoping to gain access to larger commissions, Gilbert joined forces with James Knox Taylor at the beginning of 1886. Taylor's role was primarily that of soliciting clients, managing the books, and carrying on the day-to-day business—tasks to which he was far better suited than Gilbert—while most of the design work fell to Gilbert. Formation of this partnership was the first watershed in Gilbert's career. Although the firm's output still lagged well behind the leading architects in the city, the partnership began to attract clients with deeper pockets and establish connections to a broader area of the city as well as to other cities and other states.

At the outset, expanding the reach of the firm meant taking on small commissions in order to establish a foothold, e.g. residential alterations for leading real estate dealers and financiers, carriage houses, and small houses in outlying areas. The firm did two of the latter which were actually smaller in scale and cost than any residential commission undertaken by Gilbert alone. The Dwight H. and Clara M. Watson House on the West Side was the first, built shortly after the partnership was formed; the second was the Henry L. Gray House in Dayton's Bluff, built the following year (1887). Of these, the Watson House is the more intact, as well as among the most, if not the most, complete expressions of his ambitious residential vocabulary. What is the more remarkable, if the permit information is to be believed, it was built at half the cost of his Summit Hill commissions (\$2,600 vs. \$5,000-\$8,000), showing that Gilbert did not allow limited budgets to shrink the ambitiousness of his designs.<sup>9</sup>The Watson House was one of Gilbert's three most progressive early frame residences, each with a

<sup>8</sup> Among the many failed efforts at major commissions in these early years were the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Club, a railroad station in Helena MT, and large apartment blocks for H. L. Dousman and John Farrington. Some were not built, but most went to other architects, often in spite of Gilbert's express confidence that he had the inside track. Evidence of Gilbert's engagement in and optimism regarding these competitions is in his letterpress book and drawings in the Cass Gilbert Collection of the New-York Historical Society. The surviving St. Paul frame residences of his early independent practice are the Elizabeth Gilbert House (1882), the Watson-Schurmeier House (1883), and the William Davis House (1883).

<sup>9</sup> Two of the carriage house commissions were for prospective Summit Avenue mansions for E. W. Peet and D. R. Noyes, each costing more than the Watson or Gray House. However, Peet chose to remodel rather than build anew, and Noyes chose another architect. This was the typical fate of Gilbert's fishing expeditions. Gray's house at 1044 E. Wilson remains Gilbert's

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page   6  

<u>Dwight and Clara Watson House</u> Name of Property
<u>Ramsey, Minnesota</u> County and State
 Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

nearly cubical format, that is, with three nearly equal dimensions. The other two, built for J. J. Watson (1883) and Lucius P. Ordway (1885), have been demolished. What made these houses stand apart—and point the way to Gilbert's future in residential design—is their unusual compositions, varied use of materials, and multiple-sourced ornamentation, without regard to existing stylistic niches (see Additional Items, figures 11 and 12). The Elizabeth Gilbert, Watson-Schurmeier, and William Davis commissions in the Hill neighborhood are each larger and more expensive but reliant on a Shingle Style vocabulary that Gilbert soon left behind for any commissions but summer cottages.

Gilbert's developing predilection for treating small projecting volumes as ornament is expressed with particular clarity in the Watson House. The oriel window on the front (west) elevation is the strongest example. His European sketchbooks have many samples of oriels, and his bold treatment of them became a signature element of his early residential work. In his first year in practice, he graced the J. J. Watson (no known relation) House in Woodland Park with an out-sized, centered oriel. Just months before the Watson commission, he used an oriel quite similar in form but placed on a secondary elevation in his design of the Ordway House just north of where the Cathedral of St. Paul now stands. In each case, the oriel draws attention in a manner quite unlike the treatments favored by the revered Bostonian architect, H. H. Richardson, and his multitude of followers, in which it appears as a ripple in the wall plane rather than a feature to catch the eye.<sup>10</sup>

Emancipation from the powerful influence of Henry Hobson Richardson was a major factor in the development of Gilbert's distinct brand of eclecticism. Richardson had become such a force in American architecture that a poll among architects belonging to the American Institute of Architecture named five of his buildings among the ten most important in the country. Gilbert's early letters expressed nothing but admiration for Richardson's work; and two of Gilbert's first projects, Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church and the failed entry for the Minnesota Club competition, were textbook examples of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. But by 1886, Gilbert was clearly moving in a different direction, toward an aesthetic that defied stylistic boundaries for small projects while pushing the larger commissions in an increasingly Beaux-Arts direction. The smaller commissions in particular dramatized numerous interruptions in the planes of the wall and the roof with projecting ornament, rather than following the lead of the Boston master by subordinating everything to the projection of volumes.

Dormers offered a particularly fertile field for Gilbert's imagination. His 1880 letters from France to his mother and to Clarence Johnston contain several examples, as do his water color sketches of the same period. In each case, he captured unusual shapes and styles of dormers that declared their presence rather than blending seamlessly or rhythmically into the roof. The dormers he created himself followed suit with an ornamental verve that defied the popular tendency, again following the lead of H. H. Richardson, to integrate dormers with the wall

---

only foray into the East Side, just as the Dwight and Clara Watson House remained his only commission on the West Side.  
<sup>10</sup> The existence of the J. J. Watson House was the author's discovery, based on putting together Gilbert's sketches of it, a note from Watson, a floor plate shown in the 1885 Sanborn Atlas, and a photograph of it with its second owner on its second site. Built on a lot that would soon be purchased for construction of the Aberdeen Hotel, it was moved to 429 Iglehart in 1887, then demolished in the 1970s. Its design and documentation are laid out in an unpublished essay by the author for a forthcoming book on Gilbert's Minnesota career to be published by the University of Minnesota Press. Gilbert's pencil studies of the Lucius P. Ordway House elevations and plan are the only surviving evidence of how that house was intended to look, as it was demolished in 1966 prior to the construction of St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute (now St. Paul College). The sketches are in a notebook preserved in the archives of the Avery Library at Columbia University. A single construction drawing of an Ordway House detail, the front dormer, is preserved in the Gilbert Collection of the New-York Historical Society.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page       7      

<u>Dwight and Clara Watson House</u> Name of Property
<u>Ramsey, Minnesota</u> County and State
 Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

beneath. For Dwight and Clara Watson, Gilbert ran one ridge of the dormer roof straight forward, creating a boldly triangular soffit. He also projected the sill and wall beneath the window out to the plane of the oriel below, giving the dormer a deeply sculpted look.

Even on his smallest residential commissions, Gilbert stood out among the city's 19th-century architects for his custom design of all of the moldings and surface elaborations of his houses. A large stock of standard moldings and precut shingles was available, and architects typically settled for making a selection among them. But Gilbert was fascinated with variations in profile, size, and proportion, and the effects of setting them together into compound cape moldings, skirts, aprons, and geometrical ornament, each with its own particular shadow line. The Watson House has abundant examples of this, from the molded watertable to inset shingled diamond shapes to the integration of saw-tooth ornament with compound cape molding in the main gable. Some of this was inspired by and in some cases borrowed from the detailing of McKim, Mead and White's work in which Gilbert participated. But their dramatic placement on small-house commissions was, at least in St. Paul, unique to Gilbert himself.

A row of square windows placed high in a gable was a favorite Gilbert device in his early years, and the south elevation of the Watson house provides a particularly eye-catching example. The idea likely derived from McKim, Mead, and White's work on such heralded projects as the Newport Casino, where similar window arrays often served or pretended to serve as a dovecote. Gilbert used them as attic lights, with clear functional utility as well as ornamental value.

These many examples of Gilbert's youthful architectural vocabulary in the Watson House are more than just building details. They grew from a drive to pour his experiences and imagination into the humblest of projects and most economical of formats while waiting for the monumental commissions he was convinced awaited him. The boldly projecting elements of the Watson House, its varied fenestration, and its array of custom moldings were all the work of a young man anxious to show what he could do in meager circumstances while waiting for his elevation into the Pantheon of American architects. The fact that when "his ship came in" his orientation shifted from individual, picturesque detail to the broadly sculpted surfaces of Beaux-Arts monumentalism does not diminish the value of his early work. They are the lyrics of his youth, with a value distinct from the grand epics of his maturity.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Gilbert famously announced his winning of the U. S. Custom House competition to his wife, Julia, with the words "our ship has come in" attended by sketches of the *Mayflower*, the Statue of Liberty, and a rising sun overlaid on the hotel letterhead. His later sketches putting his proudest designs on a single sheet counted only the Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church and the Endicott Building among his lasting monuments in St. Paul.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Items

Page 1

Dwight and Clara Watson House
Name of Property
Ramsey, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

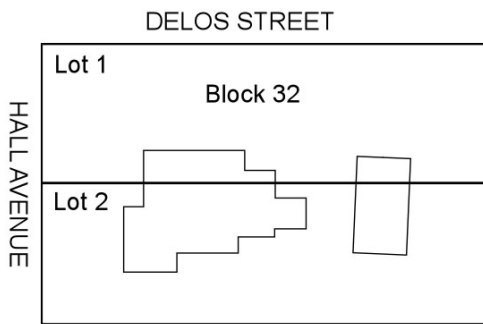


Fig 1. 2018 Plat of 402 Hall Avenue  
*Ramsey County GIS*

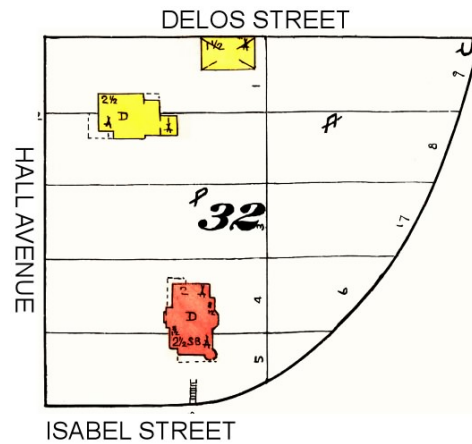


Fig 2. 1891 Plat Map of Block 32, West St. Paul Addition  
*Rascher's Atlas of St. Paul*

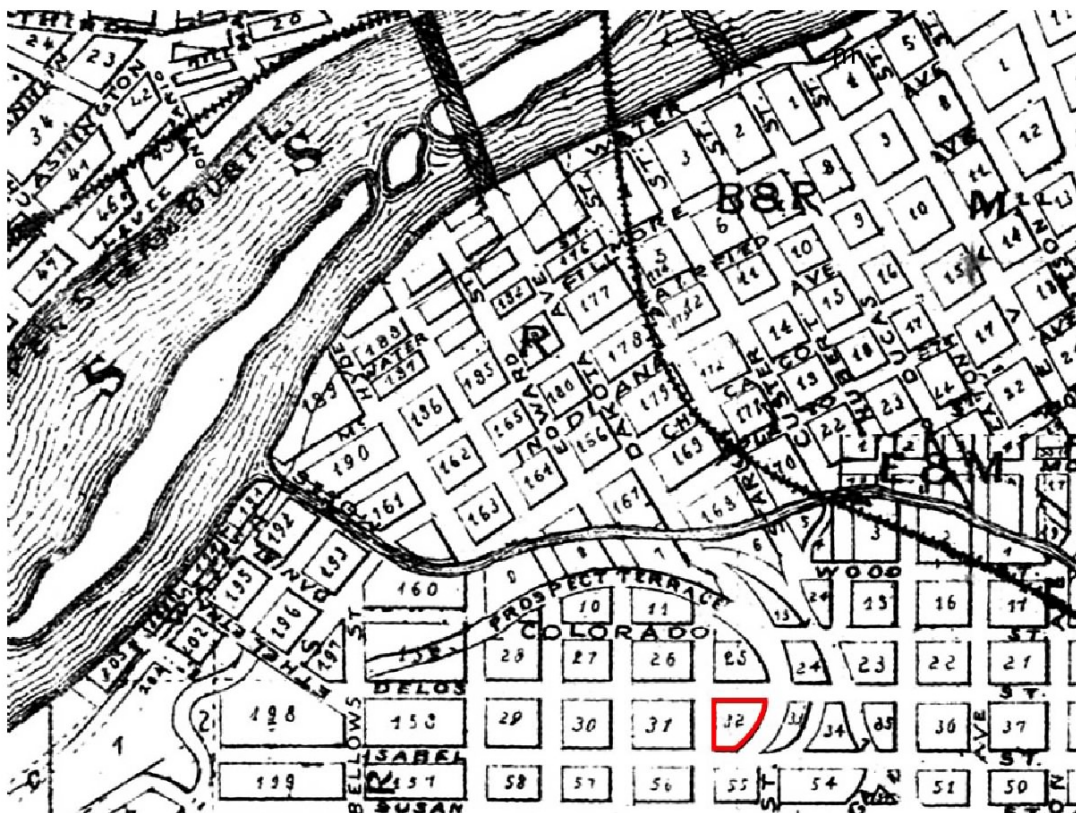


Fig 3 1887 map of St. Paul West Side, Block 32 outlined in red  
*Curtice's Standard Atlas of the City of St. Paul*

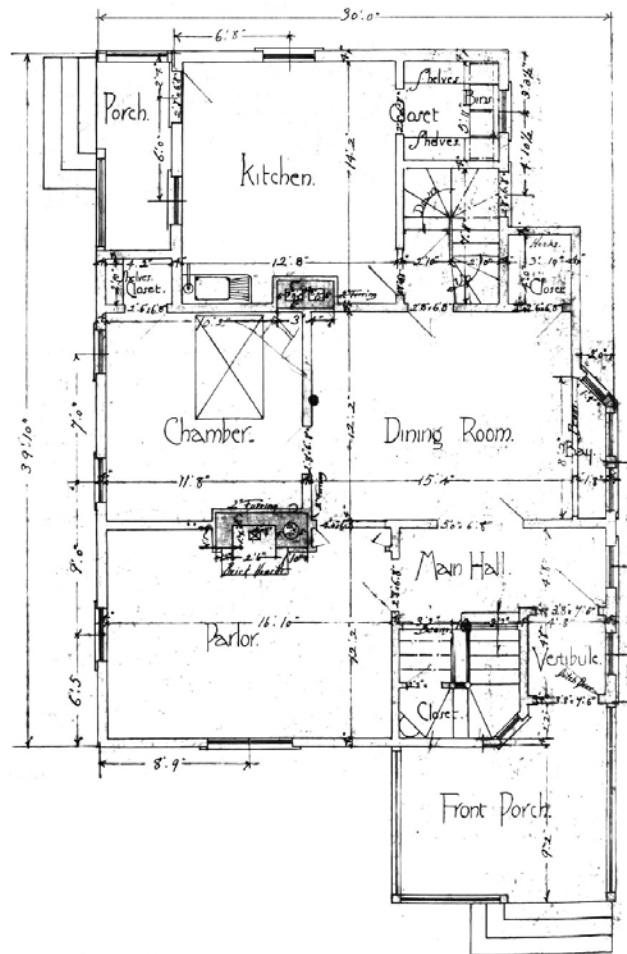
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Dwight and Clara Watson House
Name of Property
Ramsey, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Items

Page 2



First Floor Plan. Scale 1/4" per Foot.

Gilbert and Taylor, Architects.

House for D.H. Watson Esq.  
West Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Fig 4. First Floor Plan of Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Cass Gilbert Collection, New-York Historical Society

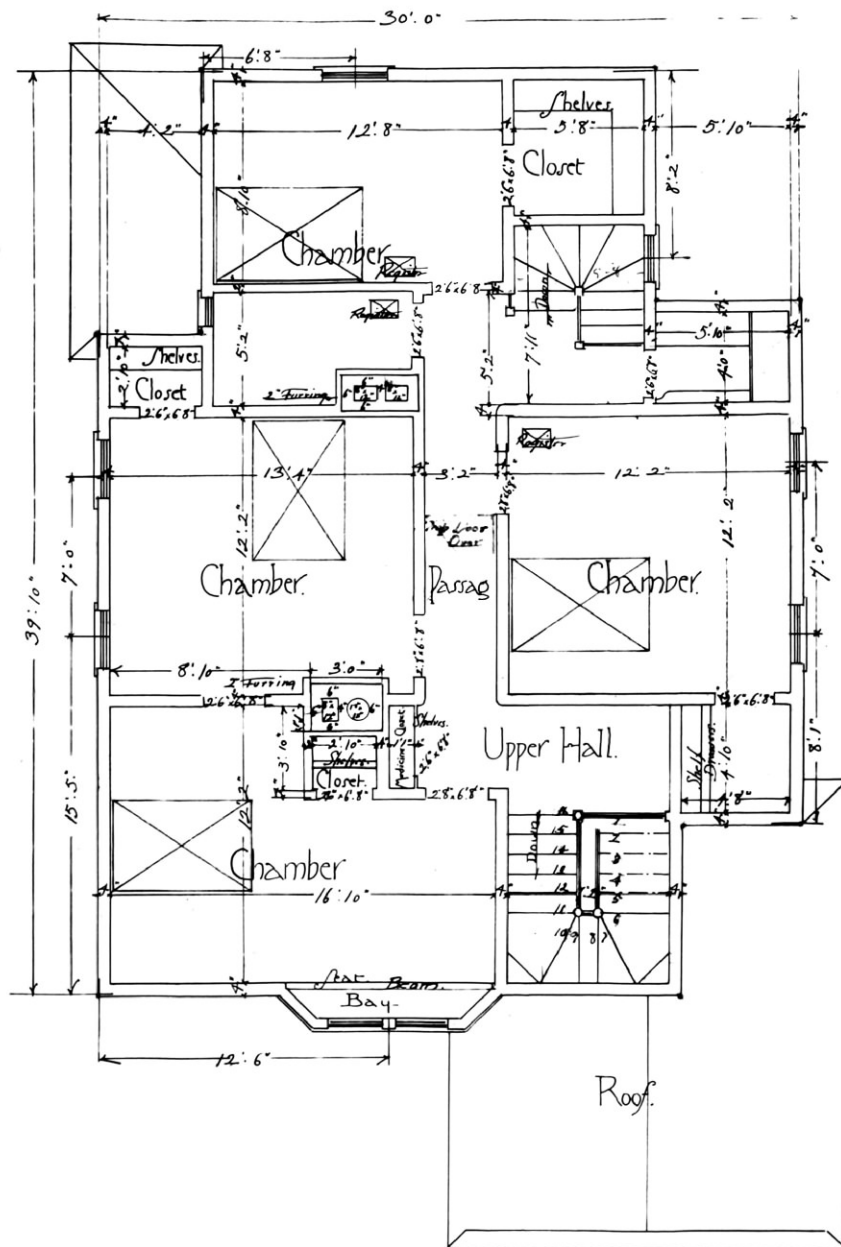
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Items

Page 3

Dwight and Clara Watson House
Name of Property
Ramsey, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Second Floor Plan. Scale 1/4" per Foot.  
 House for D.H. Watson Esq.  
 West Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Fig 5. Second Floor Plan of Dwight and Clara Watson House  
 Cass Gilbert Collection, New-York Historical Society

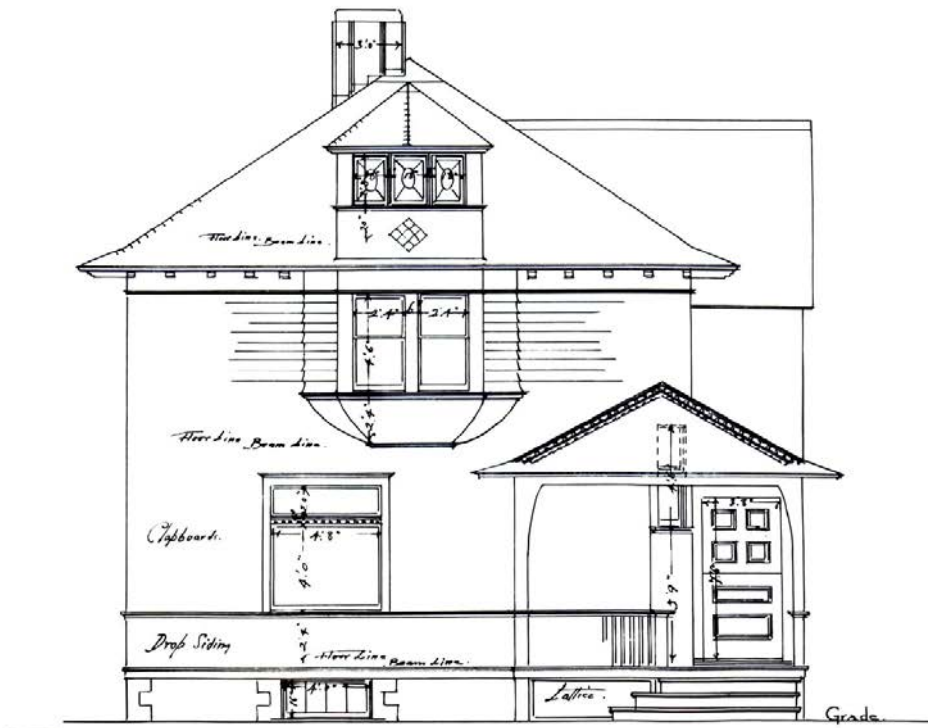
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Dwight and Clara Watson House
Name of Property
Ramsey, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Items

Page 4



West Elevation Front  
 House for Mr. D. H. Watson, St. Paul.  
 Gilbert & Taylor Architects.  
 Scale 1/4" per foot.

Fig 6. West Elevation of Dwight and Clara Watson House  
 Cass Gilbert Collection, New-York Historical Society

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Dwight and Clara Watson House
Name of Property
Ramsey, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Items

Page 5



Fig 7. South Elevation of Dwight and Clara Watson House  
*Cass Gilbert Collection, New-York Historical Society*



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Dwight and Clara Watson House
Name of Property
Ramsey, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Items

Page 6

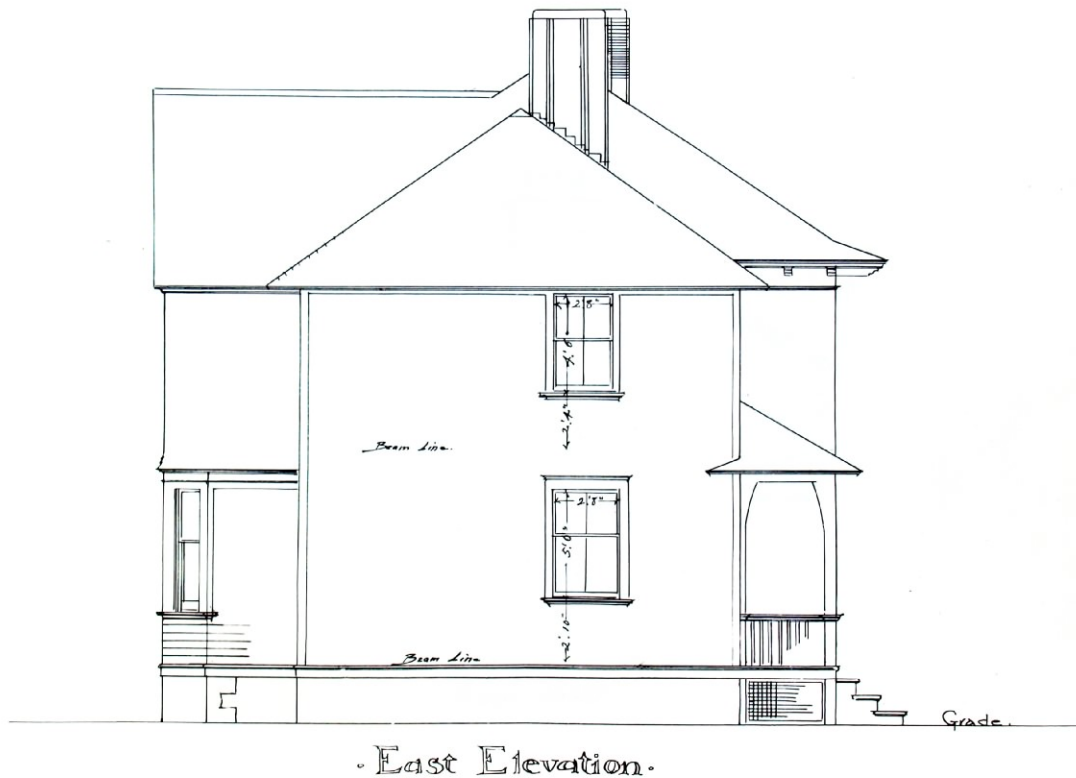


Fig 8. East Elevation of Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Cass Gilbert Collection, New-York Historical Society

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Dwight and Clara Watson House
Name of Property
Ramsey, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Items

Page 7



• North Elevation •

Fig 9. North Elevation of Dwight and Clara Watson House  
Cass Gilbert Collection, New-York Historical Society

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Items

Page 8

Dwight and Clara Watson House
Name of Property
Ramsey, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Fig 10. Dwight and Clara Watson House and Barn from the southwest, 1914  
*source: Mark Thomas*

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Items

Page 9

Dwight and Clara Watson House
Name of Property
Ramsey, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Fig. 11. Watson-Lavalee House, ca. 1900  
*Minnesota Historical Society*

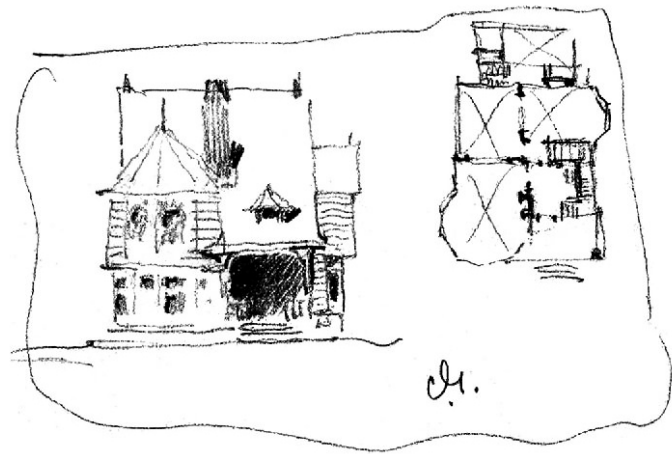


Fig 12. Sketch of Lucius P. Ordway House  
Front Elevation and First Floor Plan  
*Cass Gilbert sketchbooks*  
*Avery Library Archives, Columbia University*



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_0001  
house viewed from west, west elevation, camera facing east



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_0002  
house viewed from southwest, west and south elevations, camera facing northeast



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_0003  
house viewed from southeast standing b barn, south and east elevations, camera facing northwest



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_0004  
house viewed from north, north elevation, camera facing south





Dwight and Clara Watson House\_000  
house detail viewed from west northwest, west elevation, camera facing southeast



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_000  
house detail viewed from south, south elevation, camera facing north



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_000  
house detail viewed from south, south elevation, camera facing north



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_000  
house detail viewed from south, south elevation, camera facing north



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_000  
barn and house on Delos tree viewed from northeast, east and north elevations, camera facing southwest



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_0010  
barn viewed from northwest, north and west elevations, camera facing southeast



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_0011  
front parlor viewed from southeast corner of parlor, camera facing northwest



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_0012  
main hall and front staircase viewed from dining room, camera facing west

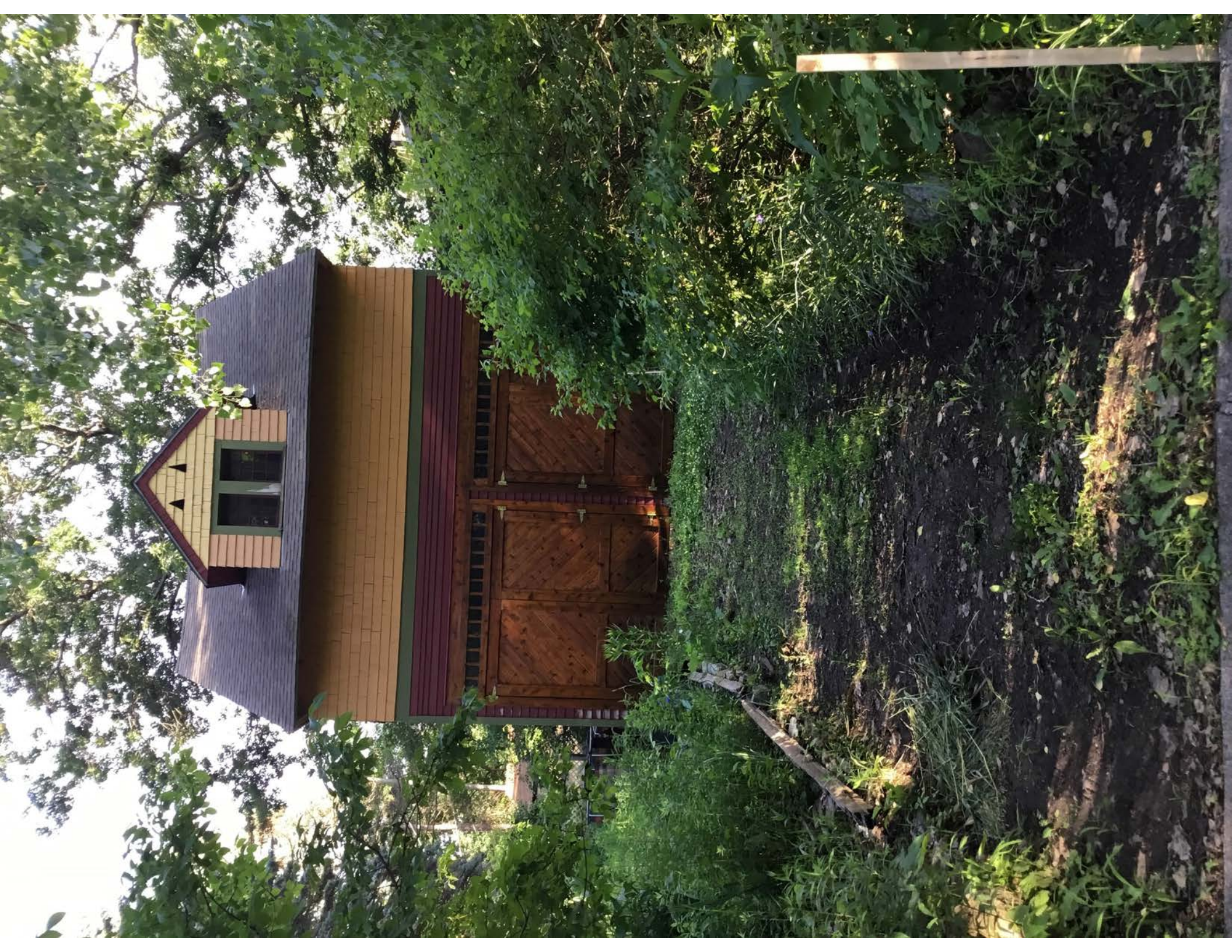




Dwight and Clara Watson House\_0013  
dining room viewed from downstairs bedroom ("chamber"), camera facing south



Dwight and Clara Watson House\_0014  
rear stairs from second floor, camera facing southeast





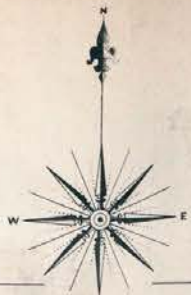




VRBAN  
WILDERNESS

617

ST. PAUL VOL. 5



607

608

W-COLORADO

6<sup>th</sup> W.P.

FRESCOTT ADD. 12

12

25

W-DELOS

8<sup>th</sup> W.P.

618

STRYKER AV.

HALL AV.

W-ISABEL

12<sup>th</sup> W.P.

W-CONGRESS

6<sup>th</sup> W.P.

625

626

