

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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A NATIONAL REGISTER LANDMARK ON TOUR



One of the houses featured on this year's Cobblestone Society Tour of homes on Saturday, June 1, will be the Barlow-Trusselle house located on South Clinton Street in Albion. To my knowledge it is the only private residence outside the Historic Court House District in Albion, to be on the National Register of Historic Places in Orleans County.

Occasionally someone will ask me if their house would be eligible for the National Register. You too, may ask what makes a dwelling suitable for this kind of landmark status. The answer is rela-

tively simple and can be summed up in one word — integrity. For example, an old house with aluminum or vinyl siding will not be eligible. The Barlow-Trusselle house however, looks exactly the way it did when completed in 1873. Even the color of wood trim is authentic. Not only the house, but the adjoining carriage barn, designed as a companion, also retains its original appearance and color scheme, i.e. no vinyl siding. A so-called restored home is also questionable for landmark designation. Restoration does not necessarily always preserve integrity. Many times in the process of resto-

joint of light colored mortar was put on over the large joints to make each brick look very precise and in its own individual frame. Note the variation of window types and details. Also, the original slate roof provides us with varied designs and stripes including the fish scale pattern.

The house sits on a rather spacious lot, but was obviously placed way off to one side so as to leave a very commodious side yard and ample space for the carriage barn.

As one enters the house, the porches come into focus, all of which are characterized with square posts and extremely low railings. The front porch has a high-pitched gable to divert water off the steps. This projects above the remaining mansard part of that roof and is supported by brackets. Its rather inventive design is again strongly Eastlake nature. The front entrance consists of double doors with etched glass opening into a square hall. A bold staircase and even bolder newel post dominate this space. The balusters are suspended along the ends of each stair tread which is a characteristic feature of stairways designed by Mr. Barlow. The railings, balusters and newel are of black walnut. The hall, living room, music room and dining room all basically have the same style woodwork, yet each room is different. Variations include Eastlake details, Second Empire designs and even Gothic patterns. Like most Second Empire homes these three rooms flow one from another making almost one large L-shaped room. Original inside folding shutters are still in place at the windows in these rooms. The living room features a walnut mantle piece of exceptional quality, while the dining room has two matching built-in corner cupboards.

Seventeen years ago Gar and Jan Trusselle purchased the house from Mrs. Marc Cole and have made every attempt to preserve the architectural integrity of this unusual home. Because the house does retain so many of its original features, which fortunately no one through the muddled up, it was granted National Landmark status in Oct. 1983.

ration, the original fabric of a home will be destroyed. For example, I've seen piles of lath and plaster out in a front yard when someone was supposedly restoring an old home. While dry wall may be far superior to fake paneling, it does not retain the original integrity of the house. Just because a house is old and may retain some original features does not necessarily make it exceptional. Another quality which is strongly considered in making it on the National Register, is historical background.

The Barlow-Trusselle house was the home of William V.N. Barlow (1810-1909); the first known architect in Albion and certainly one of the first in Orleans County. He designed the house for himself. Because he had such great influence on the visual character of the county during the 19th century, it makes the house an important legacy. Barlow's major work incidentally, is the Orleans County Court House 1857-58. Therefore, architectural integrity and historical importance go hand in hand. Not only is the integrity important, but also architectural significance. The Barlow-Trusselle house has all of these qualifications.

The Second Empire Style sometimes referred to as Mansard, emerged in the United States during the 1860's and 1870's. It's single most dominating feature is the Mansard Roof. Roofs of this type have very steep sides, flat tops and provide for dormer windows.

Before one enters this dwelling one should pay particular attention to its exterior features. Certainly, an overall focal point is the tower and rather contrived roof surmounting it. This feature alone bespeaks an Eastlake influence as does the very intricate brick detailing at the corners of the bay windows and under the overhang in certain areas. Note the brick panels on the north side of the tower. If one examines the brick work very carefully, one will note that it makes use of lime mortar in rather bold joints. Upon completion of construction, all of the masonry was stained a reddish color to blend the light color of the mortar in with the bricks. Following this procedure, a fine beaded