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: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, 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: 538 South 7th Street
   City or town: Lafayette State: IN County: Tippecanoe
   Not For Publication: ____________ Vicinity: ____________

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 x local
   Applicable National Register Criteria:
   ___A ___B x C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title: ___________________________ Date
Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
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:) ___________________

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) [x]
- District [ ]
- Site [ ]
- Structure [ ]
- Object [ ]
### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

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#### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

**DOMESTIC: single dwelling**

______________________
______________________
______________________
______________________
______________________

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

**DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling**

______________________
______________________
______________________
______________________

Sections 1-6 page 3
7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Prairie School

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
foundation: BRICK
walls: BRICK
STONE: Limestone
roof: ASPHALT
other: WOOD

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 Oliver Webster & Catherine Peirce, Jr. House is located near the center of a residential block that was part of an estate owned by the Peirces. The property was subdivided leaving the house on one lot and a large carriage house on another lot (not included in this nomination). A metal fence with tall brick piers surrounds the former estate and has an opening for a drive on this property. The large, asymmetrical brick and stone house was built in 1912 in an eclectic mix of Prairie School and, to a lesser degree, Renaissance styles. Historic brick patios and walks surround the house and original landscaping is extant. A second garage, constructed at the time the property was subdivided and the house converted to apartments, is located on the north side of the property.
The Oliver Webster & Catherine Peirce, Jr. House was built in 1912 near the center of a large, undeveloped lot bounded by 6th and 7th Streets on the west and east, and Kosuth Street on the south. The Peirces built the home in the Highland Park neighborhood south of downtown Lafayette. While a portion of the neighborhood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the boundaries do not include the Peirce House. Highland Park has several examples of large early 20th century revival style homes lining its streets. The house had a large, imposing presence on the lot which was surrounded by a decorative metal fence with tall brick piers with stone caps (photo 001). A large carriage house matching the style of the house was built north of the house (not part of this nomination). Once the estate was subdivided into outlots fronting the streets in 1946, the house became surrounded by other homes built during the 1940s-1950s, but it maintained an imposing presence due to its scale, style, and exceptional craftsmanship.

The Peirce property was purportedly landscaped and designed by students of Purdue University’s landscape design program during the early 1910s. This included trellis work, walkway and patio designs, a large sunken pool and vegetation. The sunken pool no longer exists and the trellis work is on the lot to the north and is not part of this nomination. The Peirce House lot is nicely landscaped with mature trees that date to the construction of the house and features ivy ground cover, shrubbery, and boulders that were planned to give the site a natural feeling. A brick patio is off the northwest side of the house with a walkway that extends to the north, to the former carriage house and trellis work. Low brick planters with stone caps are at the north edge of the patio and flank the walkway (photo 0006). Three short brick piers with stone caps are located on the north side of the house and form a gateway into the back of the house from the garage, and to the lawn in the northwest corner of the property (right side of photo 0002 & 0007). A brick patio with low brick walls and stone caps is off the southwest side of the house and has a brick walkway that extends along the south edge of the house (photo 0004). The lot has several mature evergreen and gingko trees (middle of photo 0006) in its back (west) and north side yards and evergreen screening off the front entrance to the southeast. While the extant trellis work is no longer part of the property being nominated, the landscaped lot still retains sufficient integrity to consider it a contributing site.

The Peirce property retains a portion of the original metal and brick fence along its east edge on 7th Street (photo 0001). The fence extends further north and south, and around the block formerly owned by the Peirce family. When the land was subdivided in 1946, a new asphalt drive was installed from the house to the road and a new gateway was created in the fence. Brick gateway piers were built to match the piers in the original fence, however, the tan brick is slightly darker than the original color. The gateway piers are tall with stone caps and stone-shaped shields near their top. The piers have a stone base and belt course near the top of the pier. A stone address block with “538” is located in the front of the north pier. Shorter piers are located in the fence to the north and south; the northern two piers have stone urns on them. The metal fence is composed of tall pickets with a pattern of rectangles between the pickets near the top of the fence. The original gateway into the property is located south of the current gateway to the Peirce House. Shorter piers flank the tall piers and the metal fence curves upward toward
the tall gateway piers. Only portions of the fence are located on the Peirce property due to the subdivision of the lot in 1946. The portions of the fence included in this nomination are the current gateway and portions of metal fence approximately five feet to the south and north. The fence is considered a contributing structure.

At the time the Peirce estate was subdivided, the large carriage house to the north became the garage for a new house built for Mrs. Catherine Peirce in her later years. The new owner of the Peirce House converted it into a handful of upscale apartments that also needed storage for automobiles. A long six-bay garage was constructed on the north side of the lot (photo 0008). The garage is covered with wood clapboards and shakes and has a low-pitched, hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles. The wood garage doors, located on the south façade, are divided into twenty-four panels. A wood window is in the east and west facades. Because the garage was built after the lot was divided, it is considered non-contributing.

The two-story Peirce House has a rambling appearance on the site. It has three wings that extend to the east, south, and north. A one-story southeast-facing corner entry is located at the intersection of the east and south wings (photos 0002 & 0003). A modern (c. 1965) one-story addition wraps around the east and south facades of the south wing of the house; its features are noticeably different (left side of photo 0003 and right side of photo 0004). The house is constructed with buff-colored brick backed by fire brick and thin stone belt coursing that accentuates the horizontality of the house. Most of the house’s windows are wood casements between stone sill and lintel courses. The sills and lintels are part of continuous belt courses that encircle the house. The roof is an exceptional feature of the house. It has very wide-overhanging and slightly flared eaves and wood soffits that are supported by large wood brackets. The brackets have a sawn scroll-like soffit brace and stacked cube-like wall brace with acorn finials at the bottom. The roof is a low-pitched hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles. Three wide chimneys with a stone belt course and cap are located on the house.

The front façade will be described in three parts: the corner entry that faces southeast, the south façade of the east wing and the east façade of the south wing. The corner entry features a one-story, three-sided vestibule with a balcony for the second story (photo 0003). A wide set of stone steps flanked with stone walls and urns lead to a porch with a stone floor. The porch features a pair of brick octagonal columns with stone caps that support a very low-pitched gabled roof composed of overhanging rafters with sawn tails. A pair of brick pilasters with stone caps support the roof against the back wall of the porch. The vestibule has a small window in its south and east walls and an entry composed of a large wood door with a full window, side-lites and transoms in its southeast wall. The vestibule’s balcony wall has a stone cap and rows of carved stone blocks that feature a classical-inspired cross design. Set into the corner of the second story is a three-sided bay with a pair of wood balcony doors with full windows on its front wall and narrow windows on its south and east walls.

The south façade of the east wing has a small square window on the east end of the first story and a rectangular window on the east end of the second story. The west end of the first and second stories has a wide window composed of a large center pane flanked by narrow 4/6 windows. The windows are trimmed with a darker buff-colored brick which shows they were
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

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NPS Form 10-900     OMB No. 1024-0018

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
County and State: Tippecanoe County, IN

Part of the 1946 remodel of the house. Originally there was one rectangular window on each floor. The east façade of the south wing (photo 0003) features a group of three windows on its first and second stories; the first story windows have transoms. The south half of the east façade steps back and features a row of four 6/6 windows on the second story. The first story is covered by a modern (c. 1965) addition that extends toward the south. The addition has a brick base and vertical wood boards that cover its walls. The addition has one small 1/1 metal window in its north half. The addition has a low-pitched hipped roof and eaves supported by pairs of small wood modillions.

The south façade of the south wing (right side of photo 0004) has a one-story addition covering its first story. The addition is divided into two parts with wood-covered walls on its east half and a slightly smaller enclosed porch on its west half. The wood-covered area has a pair of new metal windows centered in it and a continuation of the wood modillions under its eaves from the east wall. The porch is enclosed with pairs of sliding glass doors and tall windows on its south and west walls. The porch’s roof is flat and has exposed rafters. The second story of the original house has a row of six 6/6 windows on its south façade that enclosed a sleeping porch. The sleeping porch does not have large wood brackets that support its eaves.

The west façade is two-stories and is divided into four bays (photos 0004-0006). The south and north bays were originally identical with enclosed first story porches and second story sleeping porches. The south bay’s first story doors and windows were removed and the opening was enclosed with brick and one 1/1 wood window (middle of photo 0004). The second story has a row of four 6/6 windows, with the northernmost window removed and filled with wood. The north bay has its original enclosed porch entry composed of a pair of wood doors with full windows divided into multiple panes of glass (near the middle of photo 0006, partially obscured by the tree). The doors are flanked by wide wood Doric columns. Side-lites are to the outside of the columns and the doors and side-lites have transoms. A small pergola-like feature is above the porch entry and is composed of rafters with sawn tails. The second story has a row of six 6/6 windows that enclose the sleeping porch. This sleeping porch also does not have large brackets under its eaves. The bay south of the north bay steps out slightly and has a row of five windows with transoms on its first story and a row of four windows on its second story (middle of photo 0006). A large stone window box is below the second story windows. The flower box is supported by five scroll-like corbels and has a row of carved stone blocks that feature a classical-inspired cross design. The south end of this bay has an entry composed of a wood door with side-lites and transoms on its first story and a wide pair of windows on its second story (left side of photo 0005). A porch with a stone floor and a brick octagonal column is located at the entry. A brick pilaster and the column support a low-pitched hipped roof with exposed, sawn rafter tails that provide a pergola-like appearance.

The bay north of the south bay steps out from the rest of the façade approximately seven feet (photo 0005). It has pairs of windows on the first and second stories of its south wall and on the first story of its north wall; the first story windows have transoms. The west façade of the bay has a formal, symmetrical composition with a central entry composed of a pair of wood doors with full windows and transoms. Thin brick pilasters flank the entry and extend to the bottom of the second story windows. Stone caps and urns are on the tops of the pilasters. Pairs of
windows are on the first and second stories to each side of the entry and a pair of windows is centered in the second story. The first story windows have transoms. Three brick spandrels enframed with rowlocks are in the wall between the first and second stories. The north and south ends of the bay have the appearance of wide pilasters with pairs of brackets that support the roof. This bay also has the greatest influence of the Prairie Style evident in its composition.

The north façade of the north wing has two windows composed of three casements and transoms divided into multiple panes of glass on its first story (left side of photo 0006). A small rectangular window is centered between the windows on the first floor. The second story has two groups of three 6/6 windows. The east façade of the north wing has a row of four casement windows with transoms divided into multiple panes of glass on its first story. The second story has a row of four 6/6 windows that enclose a sleeping porch. A narrow bay steps out slightly on the south end of the east façade (seen on the far right side of photo 0007). It has a pair of windows on the first and second stories with transoms over the windows on the first story.

The north façade of the east wing has an informal appearance and would have faced the carriage house to the north (photo 0007). The first story has a wood door with a window in its upper half and a metal storm door on its east end. The door was inserted into a large opening that has been filled with brick. West of the former opening was a window that has also been filled in with brick. Three windows are centered in the first story of the north façade; the center window is slightly shorter than the other two. A pair of 1/1 windows is in the west end of the first story. The second story has a row of three 4/4 windows in its east end and five 1/1 windows west of the row of windows. The east façade of the east wing (photo 0002) has a pair of windows with transoms in the south half of its first story and a newer 6/6 window in its north half. This window was placed into a larger opening that had a pair of windows removed and was partially filled with brick. The second story has two pairs of windows.

The layout of the house is centered off a large central foyer immediately inside the oval-shaped entry vestibule. The east and south wings of the house extend off corners of the foyer while the north wing extends off a more central passageway composed of a door and mirrored side-lites in the north wall of the foyer (photo 0013). A rear door and small vestibule in the northwest corner of the foyer leads to a porch on the west side of the house (middle of photo 0013). A curving staircase, flanked by wood pilasters, is in the northeast corner of the foyer and extends up to the east to the second floor (photo 0024). The east wall of the foyer is curved and has wood pilasters flanking the doorways (photo 0009). The foyer has wood floors and dark-stained wood paneling. The plaster ceiling has a tall plaster cornice with acanthus leaf brackets. The foyer features two ornate built-in mirrors and original candelabra wall sconces (middle of photo 0009). The layout of the second floor, similar to the first floor, is centered off a large octagonal-shaped second floor landing above the foyer (photo 0015). A large round opening in the floor, surrounded with a wood balustrade, overlooks the foyer below in the center of the landing (photo 0015). Balcony doors are in the southeast corner of the landing and an opening overlooking the staircase is in the north wall; it has a wood balustrade (phot 0015). A small foyer off the west side of the landing has passageways that lead to the north and south wings. An entry into the east wing is located off the northeast corner of the landing near the top of the staircase. The landing has wood floors covered with carpets and painted wood paneling that extends just above the tops of the doors and
windows. The plaster ceiling has a chandelier suspended from a long chain that extends down through the overlook to the foyer.

The east wing’s first and second floors are nearly identical. A passageway from the foyer/landing leads to a living room with a kitchen off its north side through a Tudor-arched opening (photo 0012-first floor, photo 0016-second floor). The first floor has two bedrooms and closets at its east end while the second floor has a bedroom (photo 0017) with a small sitting room and bathroom at its east end. A small entry foyer is located off the main foyer on the first floor to the east wing (seen at the far end of photo 0012). The small foyer has a bathroom and closets tucked into the areas created by the curved walls of the vestibule and staircase.

The first floor of the north wing is composed of a large ballroom with an enclosed sunporch off its north end. The ballroom has a large fireplace centered in its north wall flanked by pairs of doors that lead to the sunporch (photo 0010). The ballroom has wood floors and painted wood paneling with spandrels of carved bas low-relief near the top of the walls. The pressed metal ceiling has a classical-inspired cornice around its perimeter. The fireplace surround has Ionic pilasters and a mantel composed of lion-head and scroll brackets. Ceramic tile is around the fireplace opening and on the hearth. Carved garland of roses is on the wall above the fireplace mantel. The room has historic candelabra sconces of crystal and brass. The sunporch had been divided into a bathroom and two bedrooms in 1946, but the non-historic walls were removed and the space is now divided into a bathroom and closet in its center with a bedroom in the east half of the sunporch (2018, photo 0011). A small galley kitchen is off the east side of the ballroom, but its non-historic cabinetry has been removed. The second floor of the north wing is divided into a living room and bedroom (photo 0021) that each have access to a large sleeping porch at their north end (photo 0020). The sleeping porch has a wood floor and wood panels above each of its windows. The rooms are located off a small entry vestibule off the foyer on the west side of the central landing. A small kitchen area is located off the east side of the vestibule and a bathroom is located off the west side of the vestibule (photo 0023). A Tudor-arched passageway is located between the kitchen and living room (photo 0022).

The first floor of the south wing has a small entry vestibule off the central foyer. The vestibule has a large living room off its west side, small laundry room off its south side, and a bedroom off its east side. The bedroom has a small bathroom off its northeast corner in the area created by the curved walls of the main entry vestibule and foyer. The large living room once had a broad opening to the main foyer in its northeast corner, but it was filled in. The living room has a large stone fireplace that extends to the ceiling with a Tudor-arched opening in its hearth (photo 0014). Doric pilasters support a carved stone mantel. The overmantle has a wide center recessed spandrel flanked by narrow recessed spandrels that have historic brass candelabra sconces centered in them. The room has wood floors and painted wood wainscot. The plaster ceiling has a tall cornice with classical details. A passageway leads to a kitchen off the southeast corner of the living room. A large hall is entered from the south side of the laundry. The large hall and kitchen lead to the enclosed porch on the south end of the wing. The second floor of the south wing has an entry vestibule off of a small foyer located on the west side of the central landing. The vestibule leads to a bedroom (photo 0018) on the east side of the wing and a large living room (photo 0019) on the west side of the wing. The living room has a small fireplace in its
south wall (photo 0019). The fireplace has a thin wood surround with carvings of garland and urns in low-relief. The hearth is covered with white ceramic tiles. The living room’s plaster ceiling has a simple cornice. Both the living room and bedroom lead to a former sleeping porch that has been converted to a kitchen (2018) on the south end of the wing. This space had been divided into a bedroom and bathroom, but the non-historic walls have been removed. A small dressing room is located off the northwest corner of the living room.

A wood staircase in a closet on the south wall of the foyer leads to the basement (right side of photo 0009). The house has a full basement with a concrete floor, fire brick walls, and a plaster ceiling. The house has several rooms with wood floors, but most are covered with carpets. The walls and ceilings are plaster unless noted otherwise. The house has two and three-panel doors; the three panel doors are original to the house but are not necessarily in their historic doorways.

When the house was divided into apartments in 1946, several walls were constructed to divide spaces into smaller rooms, however, most of the home’s most architecturally important spaces were not divided and some of the non-historic partition walls located in the sunporches and sleeping porches have been removed. Character defining spaces with significant architectural features include the entry vestibule and large central foyer and second floor landing. The ballroom and main living room on the first floor and the large living room in the south wing of the second floor have fireplaces and cornices that clearly define the original plan of the rooms remain intact. Many of the walls that were constructed when the house was divided into apartments in 1946 include passageways with Tudor-arched openings. Several built-in features from this period included wood casework in the kitchens and small living rooms, bookcases in the north sleeping porch, and closets off of the bedrooms. Bathrooms and kitchens that were added in 1946 have had their fixtures, finishes and some of their cabinetry removed. The house is undergoing restoration with minor changes that include putting fixtures and cabinetry back into bathrooms and kitchens. A pair of windows will be placed in the location of a single window on the east façade of the east wing to match the original appearance and remove the brick filled into the original opening.
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

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Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
Tippecanoe County, IN
Name of Property                  County and State

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
ARCHITECTURE


Period of Significance
1912-1946


Significant Dates


Significant Person (last name, first name)
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)


Cultural Affiliation


Architect/Builder (last name, first name)
Mann, William D.
Chew, Joshua, Jr.
The period of significance begins in 1912 when the Peirce House was constructed on the large lot. It ends in 1946 when the property was divided into out lots and the house was divided into apartments.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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 Oliver Webster & Catherine Peirce, Jr. House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C, with architecture as the area of significance. The house is an impressive example of the influence the Prairie School had in Lafayette, combined with more classical features of the Italian Renaissance style. The house’s most important architectural features, both inside and out, demonstrate a high level of craftsmanship in construction and design by architect William D. Mann.

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

The Oliver Webster & Catherine Peirce, Jr. House blends features of two styles popular during the early part of the 20th century. The architect-designed house is more heavily influenced by the Prairie Style, but it clearly uses the Italian Renaissance style to provide formality to the design. This may have been done to better blend it into the neighborhood of more traditionally-designed large homes. Discussion on both styles is important to underscore the significance of the home’s architecture.

The Prairie style, an outgrowth of the Arts & Crafts movement, was born in Chicago with Frank Lloyd Wright being the architect most associated with the style. Wright’s Winslow House in Chicago, 1893, is thought to be the first example of Prairie style architecture. The style is one of only a few truly indigenous American forms and its highest concentration occurs in the Midwestern United States, particularly near the Chicago regional area. The popularity of the style was short lived; it lasted from about 1900 through 1930.1 Its emphasis was on the horizontal with architectural features of the house inspired by the vast expanse of the prairie. Particularly important stylistic features are low-sloped roofs and floor levels acting as vertical planes. Conversely, the Italian Renaissance Revival style was borrowed from early European precedents. The style resulted from the many American architects and their clients who made visits to Italy at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. With first-hand

1 McAlester, pg. 440
knowledge of the architectural models, the style could be expertly interpreted in the United States. The architect, William D. Mann’s practice was located in Chicago, the epicenter of the Prairie Style, but was known to practice in revival styles and had traveled to Europe.

The Prairie Style’s influence on the Peirce House is evident in a number of design features. First, the house has a more rambling floor plan which lacks the formality of symmetrical facades. The wings that extend from the central foyer of the house stretch the house into the landscape with large banks of porch windows and doors that puncture the wall planes to engage the outdoors. The house also has strong horizontality highlighted by five bands of stone belt courses that divide the facades into three parts. The tops and bottoms of windows and doors on the first and second stories are framed by the stone courses to further create horizontality. The top section has the appearance of being sheltered beneath the roof’s wide overhanging eaves, similar to many of Frank Lloyd Wright’s designs. The low-pitched hipped roof with its eaves is also a feature of the Prairie Style. Another subtle influence of the Prairie Style is seen in the design of the one-story corner entry vestibule (photo 0003). It has a balcony on its roof with a tall balcony wall that creates a horizontal feature in front of a three-sided bay with balcony doors. The entry porch’s pergola-like appearance with octagonal brick columns and sawn rafter tails borders on both Craftsman and Prairie styles. This pergola design was carried over to the back (west) porch and pergolas built as landscape features away from the house.

Possibly the strongest influence of the Prairie Style is seen in one of the bays on the west façade. The bay steps out from the main façade approximately seven feet and is the most formally arranged of any sections of the other facades, being wholly symmetrically arranged (photo 0005). The wall is framed by two wide pilasters that flank three equal bays. The center bay, which contains an entry on the first story, is flanked by narrow brick pilasters that have stone caps and Prairie Style urns on the second story. The bays have pairs of windows on each story that fill the space between the wide outside pilasters and narrow pilasters. Brick spandrels enframed with rowlocks are in the wall between the first and second stories. Because this wall steps out from the rest of the façade, the wide-overhanging eaves appears to project even further out from the façade. This composition is very similar to many of Frank Lloyd Wright’s and other architects’ Prairie Style designs.

While the Prairie Style influence is strongly evident, the influence of European revival styles is also evident. The most evident influence of the Italian Renaissance style is a feature of the eaves. The style worked hand-in-hand with the Prairie Style’s use of wide-overhanging eaves by the insertion of massive, highly articulated brackets supporting the eaves (photos 0002-0007). The styles complimented each other because of the Italian Renaissance style’s use of horizontal breaks to form a base, which is done through the use of stone belt courses: two below and one above the first story windows. The north bay of the west façade features another strong tie to the Renaissance style through the use of a pair of Doric columns that flank porch doors and support a narrow overhanging pergola-like porch roof (middle of photo 0006). This feature was also once located on the south bay prior to the 1946 renovation. The Peirce House also has rows of small square stones carved with classically-inspired designs that recall styles opposite of the forward-looking Prairie Style. These are seen on the corner entry vestibule and on a window box on the west façade (photos 0003 & 0006).
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
Tippecanoe County, IN

The interior evokes anything but the Prairie Style. With the exception of possibly the sunroom and sleeping room porches that feature rows of windows and doors, the interior is steeped in classical design features. Three rooms incorporate the use of poche to form rounded end walls with smaller utility and toilet rooms in the voids formed by the spaces behind the curved walls. Poche refers to the method by which rooms are given shape by closing in of corners to create definition of geometry beyond what typical construction would realize. These areas may be filled-in with masonry or framing, or in the case of the Peirce House, be used for additional, more utilitarian, spaces. The oval-shaped entry vestibule, large foyer (photo 0009), and octagonal-shaped second story landing (photo 0015) have this design feature popular in formally organized plans of Classical architecture. A wide enclosed staircase curves from the foyer to the landing to further highlight the non-rectilinear design of the spaces (photo 0024). A large round opening in the floor of the landing provides an overlook to the foyer and is reminiscent of formal rotundas (photos 0009 & 0015). Dark wood paneling and door surrounds composed of pilasters provide a rich appearance to the foyer. The ceiling has a plaster cornice with acanthus leaf brackets and highly-ornamented built-in mirrors are on two walls of the foyer (middle of photo 0009).

Two other impressive interior spaces are the main living room and ballroom on the first floor. The living room has a large limestone fireplace with a Tudor arched opening and pilasters that support a carved mantel (photo 0014). The room has wood wainscoting and a tall classical cornice. The ballroom has a large fireplace centered in its north wall (photo 0010). The fireplace has Ionic pilasters that support a classical entablature with scroll and lion head brackets that support the mantel. The room has floor-to-ceiling wood paneling on its walls and a tall classical cornice. The patterned ceiling is painted white and further enhances the formality of the room. The wood paneling and wainscoting in the house, cornices at the top of the walls, fireplaces, and historic candelabra sconces are exceptional classical details.

Examples of the Prairie Style are uncommon in Lafayette and Tippecanoe Township. The only other example of the style is the Blistain House located at 615 Kossuth Street, immediately south of the Peirce House. The two houses would have faced each other prior to 1946. The Blistain House was built in 1917 and was designed by architect Charles Nicol. It is a two-story, buff-colored brick house with a hipped roof with wide-overhanging eaves. The front façade is asymmetrically arranged with a full-width, one-story front porch supported by wide and narrow brick pilasters. A porte-cochere is on the east side of the house.

There are significantly more examples of the Italian Renaissance style in the area, mostly due to the popular use of the style in West Lafayette on the campus of Purdue University and outlying neighborhoods of sorority and fraternity houses. Three fraternity houses were built in the style during the late 1910s and early 1920s. They are three stories with formal front facades that feature arched windows and entries. The geosciences and pharmacy building on campus was built in the style in 1929 and the city of West Lafayette built a small fire house using the style in about 1920 on Northwestern Avenue. A small chapel was built in the style at the Indiana Soldiers’ Home in 1922 and features three large arched entries. In Lafayette, a large four-story building was constructed in the downtown at 217 N. 6th Street in 1923. Known as the Painters & Decorators Building, at four-stories, it is the largest example of the style in Lafayette and
features an arched entry and tall first story/base. St. Lawrence Catholic Church located on North 19th Street was built in the style in about 1915. It features a corner bell tower/entry with a low-pitched hipped roof covered in tiles. Only two residential examples of the style are located in Lafayette, and both are located in the Highland Park neighborhood near the Peirce House. They are the Callahan House at 625 Kossuth and the Purdue President’s House as 515 South 7th Street. They were constructed in 1917 and c. 1919 respectively. Like the Bliston House, which is two houses west, the Callahan House would have faced the Peirce House prior to the 1946 development of the estate. The two-story Callahan House has darker tan-colored brick walls with brick quoins on its corners and a symmetrical front façade. The house has arched windows on its first story and a formal entry with an entablature and pediment with a broken cornice. The Purdue President’s House is on the east side of 7th Street, just three houses north of the Peirce House. Its walls are stuccoed and it has a hipped roof covered with red tiles. Its front façade is asymmetrical and appears rambling with a large arched opening for a porch and entry on its north side. The Peirce House is larger than these and the Prairie examples and predates each by only a few years.

Both the architect and builder attributed with the design and construction of the Peirce House had strong ties to Lafayette. The builder, Joshua Chew, Jr., was born into a family of brick masons in 1866. His father was born in Virginia in 1830 where he learned the masonry trade from his father before arriving in Lafayette in 1857. Joshua Chew, Sr. first worked as a bricklayer and then formed a partnership to develop a kiln on the banks of the Wabash & Eerie Canal. The elder Chew worked under John Purdue’s supervision to build the first six buildings on the campus of Purdue University during the 1870s. Joshua Chew, Jr. and two of his brothers continued in the brick masonry and contracting business in Lafayette. The younger Chew was instrumental in the formation of the Lafayette contractors association in 1920.

William D. Mann was born in Rockville, Indiana in 1870, and attended the University of Illinois during the mid-1890s. He returned to Lafayette and entered a partnership with his brothers in the W. D. Mann Paint and Roofing Company in 1896. In 1899, the company became the Mann-Boyle manufacturing company with William D. Mann elected president. The company manufactured roofing, paints and asphalt materials. He left for Chicago in about 1901 and formed a partnership with Victor Matteson by 1903. Mann designed buildings in several revival styles including Tudor, Colonial, and French Provincial. He moved his Chicago office to Highland Park, where his residence was, during the 1920s. Mann did at least three other projects in Lafayette, likely receiving those commissions from his acquaintances during his time with his manufacturing interests. These include the remodel of the Cecil Fowler House (corner of 10th and South Streets) in 1916, the Charles Corey House at 512 Kossuth Street c. 1916, and Dr. Levering House at 724 North Sixth Street in c. 1917 (demolished). The latter two houses are located in the same neighborhood as the Peirce House.

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2 Topping, pg. 65
3 Indiana Construction Recorder, Vol. II No. 25, pg. 2
4 Fowler House Building Preservation Plan, pgs. 10-11
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

County and State: Tippecanoe County, IN

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

Oliver Webster Peirce, Jr. was born in Lafayette in 1866 to Oliver & Mary (Potter) Peirce, Sr. Peirce was born into a wealthy family of merchants. Their enterprises included a large coffee roasting corporation known as “Peirce’s Golden Rio” and the O.W. Peirce & Company, incorporated in 1904 with capital of over $250,000. O. W. Peirce, Jr. began working in his father’s firm at the age of sixteen and continued with the company, forming one of the largest wholesale groceries in Indian, until 1929 when he sold his interests. The younger Peirce became a director of the Old National Bank in Lafayette, and later a director for First Merchants National Bank.

Oliver Webster Peirce, Jr. married Catherine Miller, the daughter of John and Amanda Miller of Lafayette, in 1894. They had one child, Mariam, who married Burr Swezey, who became the president of the City Trust Company of Lafayette. The couple had two children: Burr Swezey, Jr. and Peirce. After Oliver Webster Peirce, Jr.’s death in 1946, Peirce’s widow was approached by a neighbor, Lawrence Thise, who proposed subdividing the estate. Part of the agreement included building a new house for Catherine Peirce north of the original house. It is located on a sub-lot that includes the original carriage house and trelliswork. Mrs. Peirce’s butler/driver continued to live in the second floor of the carriage house and her maid/cook lived in the new house with Mrs. Peirce.
9. Major Bibliographical References

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

*American Contractor (The).* Vol. XXXIX, No. 25. Pg. 66. 22 June 1918.


*Fowler House Building Preservation Plan:* Ratio Architects, Indianapolis. 2015

Historic photographs from descendants of the Peirce family.


Topping, Robert W. *A Century and Beyond-the History of Purdue University.* West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1998.

United States Federal Population Census, Tippecanoe County, IN: 1870, 1880, 1910
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
Tippecanoe County, IN
Name of Property                   County and State

Primary location of additional data:
____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
  Name of repository: ________________________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 157-333-33180

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

Use the UTM system

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☑ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 16  Easting: 509410  Northing: 4473342
2. Zone:  Easting:       Northing:
3. Zone:  Easting:       Northing:
4. Zone:  Easting:       Northing:

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

Beginning at a point 198’ north of the northwest corner of the intersection of Kossuth and 7th Streets, on the west side of 7th Street, face west and continue in a line slightly northwest 88’ then turn southwest and continue in a line 88’ southwest. Turn west and continue in a line 18’ then turn south and continue in a line 21’. Turn west and continue in a line 88’ then turn north and continue in a line 192 ½’. Turn east and continue in a line 178’ then turn south and continue in a line 70’. Turn slightly southeast and continue in a line 16’ then turn slightly
more east and continue in a line 67 ½’ to the west edge of 7th Street. Turn south and continue in a line with the west edge of 7th Street 24’ to the place of beginning.

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

The boundary described above is a part of Jeremiah Bartholomew’s addition of out lots to the city of Lafayette, specifically a part of out-lot number 6 that was created when the Peirce estate was subdivided. The boundary includes the Peirce residence and period landscaping, and a portion of brick and metal fence that once enclosed the larger estate. The boundaries also include a garage constructed for the residents of the house once it was converted into apartments.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kurt West Garner  
organization: K.W. Garner Consulting  
street & number: 12954 6th Road  
city or town: Plymouth  state: IN  zip code: 46563  
e-mail: kwgarner@kwgarner.com  
telephone: 574-936-0613  
date: March 1, 2016

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**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.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 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.
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House  
Tippecanoe County, IN  

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House  
City or Vicinity: Lafayette  
County: Tippecanoe  State: Indiana  
Photographer: Kurt West Garner  
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018  
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
View looking northwest along 7th Street at property and fence.  

1 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House  
City or Vicinity: Lafayette  
County: Tippecanoe  State: Indiana  
Photographer: Kurt West Garner  
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018  
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
Looking west toward east façade.  

2 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House  
City or Vicinity: Lafayette  
County: Tippecanoe  State: Indiana  
Photographer: Kurt West Garner  
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

Name of Property:
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  Looking southwest toward corner entry.

3 of 24.

Name of Property:  Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity:  Lafayette
County:  Tippecanoe  State:  Indiana
Photographer:  Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed:  May 30, 2018
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  Looking northeast toward south and west facades.

4 of 24.

Name of Property:  Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity:  Lafayette
County:  Tippecanoe  State:  Indiana
Photographer:  Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed:  May 30, 2018
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  Looking east toward west façade’s second from south bay.

5 of 24.
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: May 30, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest toward north and west facades.

6 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

City or Vicinity: Lafayette

County: Tippecanoe State: Indiana

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: May 30, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south at the north façade of the east wing.

7 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

City or Vicinity: Lafayette

County: Tippecanoe State: Indiana

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: May 30, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking north at front façade of garage.

8 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity: Lafayette

County: Tippecanoe  State: Indiana

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: May 30, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking east in central foyer.

9 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

City or Vicinity: Lafayette

County: Tippecanoe  State: Indiana

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: May 30, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest in ballroom.

10 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

City or Vicinity: Lafayette

County: Tippecanoe  State: Indiana

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: May 30, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast in north wing’s sunporch.
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
Name of Property
Tippecanoe County, IN
County and State

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity: Lafayette
County: Tippecanoe State: Indiana
Photographer: Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west in east wing’s living room.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity: Lafayette
County: Tippecanoe State: Indiana
Photographer: Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest in foyer.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity: Lafayette
County: Tippecanoe State: Indiana
Photographer: Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south in main living room toward fireplace.

14 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity: Lafayette
County: Tippecanoe State: Indiana
Photographer: Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking east in second floor landing.
15 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity: Lafayette
County: Tippecanoe State: Indiana
Photographer: Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking east in east wing’s second floor living room.
16 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity: Lafayette
County: Tippecanoe State: Indiana
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: May 30, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast in east wing’s second floor bedroom.

17 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

City or Vicinity: Lafayette

County: Tippecanoe

State: Indiana

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: May 30, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south in north wing’s second floor bedroom.

18 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House

City or Vicinity: Lafayette

County: Tippecanoe

State: Indiana

Photographer: Kurt West Garner

Date Photographed: May 30, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest in south wing’s second floor living room.

19 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House  
Name of Property  
City or Vicinity: Lafayette  
County: Tippecanoe  
State: Indiana  
Photographer: Kurt West Garner  
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018  
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of 
camera: Looking northeast in north wing’s sleeping porch.
20 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House  
City or Vicinity: Lafayette  
County: Tippecanoe  
State: Indiana  
Photographer: Kurt West Garner  
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018  
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of 
camera: Looking south in north wing’s second floor bedroom.
21 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House  
City or Vicinity: Lafayette  
County: Tippecanoe  
State: Indiana  
Photographer: Kurt West Garner  
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018  
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of 
camera: Looking north in north wing’s second floor kitchen to the living room.
22 of 24.
Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity: Lafayette
County: Tippecanoe  State: Indiana
Photographer: Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west in former second floor bathroom.
23 of 24.

Name of Property: Peirce, Oliver Webster, Jr. & Catherine, House
City or Vicinity: Lafayette
County: Tippecanoe  State: Indiana
Photographer: Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed: May 30, 2018
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking down/west at staircase from second floor.
24 of 24.

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.