

16United 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 PropertyHistoric name: Crosby, Grace E, HouseOther names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 413 W. DeWald St.City or town: Fort Wayne State: IN, 46802 County: AllenNot 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 X 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 X 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 X 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

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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 ☐

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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.)

Work in progress

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Mid 19th Century: Italianate

OTHER: gable-front

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: BRICK

walls: WOOD: weatherboard

roof: ASPHALT

other:

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 Grace E. Crosby House is a one-and-a-half story, wood-frame house. It was built in the Italianate style c.1867, with limited alterations in the Craftsman style c.1915, attributed to Grace E. Crosby.¹ This gable-front house is composed of a rectangular primary block with a steep gable facing the street. The house rests on a brick foundation. There is a long, shed dormer on the west side of the primary roof in the Craftsman style. The east side of the house has an oversized side porch in the Craftsman style. The rear of the house is extended by a slightly-setback wing; other sections are one-story with flat roofs (also likely additions made during

¹ The porch addition and the rear addition that abuts it appear on the 1919 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, Fort Wayne, Vol. 2, p. 185. This edition of the map has paste-overs from 1951, however, it appears that the houses at 413-401 W. DeWald have no later paste-overs.

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Crosby's ownership and residence here). There is a large non-contributing two-car garage (c.1968) on the rear of the lot. It can be reached by an alley that runs parallel to West DeWald Street. The rear yard is fenced by a combination of wood picket fencing and chain-link fencing.

Narrative Description

Exterior:

The Grace E. Crosby House is located at 413 West DeWald Street, immediately northwest of the Williams Woodland Park Historic District, listed in the National Register (1991). The Crosby House was built c.1867 on the south side of West DeWald Street, in mid-block between Fairfield Avenue and Hoagland Avenue. It has a modest setback from DeWald, matching the setbacks of other houses on this portion of the street. The lot is slightly higher in elevation than the park strip and the public sidewalk in front of the house; this elevation change requires one step up in the sidewalk that leads toward the house from the public sidewalk. Concrete sidewalks lead to the front door of the house, as well as to a porch on the east side of the house. The landscaping that surrounds the house is well-established; with some of the foundation plantings identifiable in a 1962 photo of the house. There is also a non-contributing garage, c.1968.

The Crosby House has a plan that is for the most part rectangular. A rear wing, slightly offset to the west, has a gable roof that is slightly lower than the gable of the main block of the house. Flat-roofed additions are found at the rear. The bedroom at the southeast corner extends several feet east of the rear wing, allowing an offset and a window in that location. This also creates an ell where the side porch was added to the house. There is no front porch; only a set of steps to the front door. At the rear there is a small hood over the back door, however the area has been semi-enclosed with walls and a roof.

The Crosby House has a steep-pitched, asphalt shingle-covered, front-gable roof with enclosed eaves. The eaves are supported by pairs of thin scroll-cut brackets that are placed at the center of the gable, the front corners of the house, and midway between. The eaves are outlined by a flat frieze board with raking dentils and a molding. The west side of the roof contains a shed-roof dormer that also has enclosed eaves, but only a simple molding. The south end of the gable at the right of the house has a simple, exterior brick chimney. Flat roof sections at the rear of the house appear to have EPDM roofs and built-in gutters.

The Crosby House has wood clapboard walls on all sections of the structure, with the exception of wood shingle siding on the west dormer. Thin corner boards are used, that terminate in a wood water table that provides a visual break, just above the brick foundation.

The front façade has three bays on the first floor with the west bay being the main entrance (photos 0001-0003). The second story (half story) has a centered triple window group. The windows of the Crosby House are varied; some are original to the Italianate structure and others date to the Craftsman additions. For example, the two-over-two wood windows on the first floor front are likely original (c. 1867) while the triple window group has one-over-one windows that may be from c. 1915. Certainly, the paired casement windows are of c.1915 manufacture. The façade of the house has two, two-over-two windows on the first floor and a set of three windows grouped in a Palladian manner on the second floor. The set of three windows has a large one-over-one window in the center, flanked by two narrow one-over-one windows. The front door is

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offset to the right (or to the west) on the façade. It is a single door with glazing at the top, with a transom above the door. The transom contains leaded glass (transom visible in photo 0025). The single front door has a set of concrete steps for access. Originally there was a small wood stoop and wood steps with iron railings at this door. All window and door openings on the primary façade are capped by pedimented hoods with decorative moldings and ears on the sides. Other windows in the house include two-over-two, one-over-one, and casement windows. The west dormer contains a ribbon of six-over-one windows; since the whole dormer was added c. 1915, the windows date to that time. The windows of the façade originally had operable wood-louvered shutters, as shown in a c.1962 photo. Although the shutters have been removed, the mounting hardware remains, and the shutters are stored in the basement of the house. Additionally, most windows are covered by wood storm windows that appear to be from the 1915 period.

The porch on the east side of the house was built c.1915 in the Craftsman style, presumably designed by Grace Crosby, as she had the knowledge and expertise for design (see statement of significance for discussion; see photos 0004-0007). It has a flat roof with boxed eaves and a decorative molding on the box beam. The roof is supported by slightly oversized square columns with classical details. A clapboard wall balustrade stretches along the east side of the porch. (It is possible there is an open balustrade within the clapboard siding.) The porch can be accessed from the front by a set of wide wood steps, or from the rear yard as well. It can also be accessed by a door from the interior of the house. This door is certainly a c.1915 replacement, it is a standard wood door with multiple panes, protected by a wood storm door. The three windows along the east wall under the porch are early or original two-over-two windows with shutter hinges on the surround boards.

Aside from two square window openings, the west side of the house has only the large shed dormer added in c. 1915 (photo 0003). The square openings are diagonal to one another, with the lower lighting an intermediate stair landing. Both house multi-paned wood casement windows, c. 1915.

The rear of the house has the gabled extension with chimney in the center of the wall, a flat-roofed, wide addition with eaves styled like the porch entablature, and a small, low room addition extending from the middle rear section, corresponding to a bathroom (photos 0009-0011).

Interior:

The primary front door, on the façade, leads directly into the front parlor (photos 0025 and 0026). The door dates to the c.1915 period. It is glazed, with horizontal panels beneath and above the window. The front room stretches the width of the house. It has two windows in the east wall, looking toward DeWald. Both of these long and narrow windows are accented by decorative recessed panels below the window sills and molded backband trim edging the surround boards (visible best in photo 0026). The front room window surrounds appear to be original (c.1867). There is a cased opening exactly opposite the front door; this opens to a somewhat awkward area where the staircase is located (photo 0024).

Diagonally from the front door another cased opening connects to a sitting area, with two windows in the east wall (photos 0023 and 0024). The sitting area, through a cased opening, connects further south to the original kitchen/dining room of the house (photo 0012). On the west side of the sitting area, another cased opening with glazed French doors connects to the

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area with the stairs (photo 0024). The French doors are typical of c. 1915 millwork, though the opening is trimmed similarly to those that appear to be 19th century in date.

The staircase, railings and balustrade are of Craftsman design, a product of the c.1915 remodeling (photos 0024, 0027, and 0028). The square newel posts have chamfered corners, and they are topped by square caps. The stairs have square balusters, decorative handrails, and decorative moldings. When the stairs reach the second floor it blends with the original scroll-sawn post and railing with a simple handrail and square balusters. The casement window lighting the first stair landing is c. 1915 in date.

The south room, or the original kitchen/dining room of the house, became a dining room and multipurpose room after the construction of a small kitchen on the rear of the house, offset to the southwest corner. The east wall of the room has a window and a Craftsman-style, 15-pane, glazed door to the side porch (photo 0012). There are two windows on the west wall. The room has a chair rail, mounted somewhat high on the walls. The south wall has a door that leads to the kitchen, and a door to a bedroom at the southeast corner of the house. There is a small closet on the east wall.

The first-floor bedroom is rectangular; it has a south door that connects to a half bathroom, and one window on the north and south walls each (photos 0013-0015). The current kitchen is narrow and has a glazed door that exits south to the back yard (photos 0018-0022). A single window is located in the west wall. Near the kitchen entrance from the multi-purpose room a door opens to narrow stairs to access the basement. The front of the original house is on a crawl space, while the basement is under the original kitchen.

The stairway to the second floor has two, square, multi-light casement windows on the west wall that light the stairs and two landings. The stairs give access to a central, second-floor multipurpose room (photos 0029 and 0030). The central room was likely used as a common bedroom. The south wall of the center room has a multi-light "witches window" that is set on a diagonal; this dates to the c.1915 remodeling (photo 0030, left).

In the north wall of the central room, a door opens to the front bedroom, overlooking DeWald Street (photos 0031-0034). The front bedroom has the impressive Palladian window arrangement in the north wall. The sill is very low, near the floor. The west wall has a very small closet in the south corner, and to the right of the closet there is a ribbon of three west-facing six-over-one windows.

The south wall of the central multipurpose room has a door to access the bathroom. Like the first-floor kitchen, it is long and narrow (photo 0035). A window overlooks the rear yard. Small storage spaces under the eaves can be accessed from the bathroom and the central room.

Generally, the interior of the house retains original (or c.1915) woodwork with decorative moldings, baseboards, doors with four recessed-panels, and hardwood floors. The windows are all wood sash with original (to both 19th century and c.1915) trim, and the walls of the house are lath and plaster. The later doors present in the house have horizontal recessed panels.

The c.1968 garage at the rear of the lot has a low gable roof with a ridge that is parallel to the alley. It has enclosed eaves and wood clapboard siding without corner boards. A large, single garage door faces west, with an asphalt and concrete apron in front of the door. The current

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garage likely dates to c.1968. It replaced an earlier garage or small barn that was lost to fire c.1965, This garage is non-contributing.

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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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c.1867
c.1894-1930

Significant Dates

c.1867
c.1915

Significant Person (last name, first name)

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Crosby, Grace E.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder (last name, first name)

Unknown
Crosby, Grace E.

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Period of Significance (justification)

The house was built c.1867 and was Grace E. Crosby's lifelong home (born 1874). She occupied the house during the period of her active career as an architect, starting c.1894 and extending to 1930. She also occupied this house after her retirement in 1930 to her death in 1962.

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 Grace Crosby House is locally significant under Criterion B for its association with Grace E. Crosby. This was her life-long home; she occupied the house as a child and young adult and lived in the house during the period of her active career as an architect. It was also her home after her retirement, and to her death. Crosby worked as a "tracer" and draftswoman for local architects as early as c.1894. She gained experience with local firms and was eventually employed by c.1909 as an architect by Wildwood Builders, where Crosby was the design partner of Joel Ninde, a woman self-taught in architecture. Their house designs changed the streetscape of Fort Wayne, adding over 300 houses to the city. In several cases the firm developed neighborhoods with concentrations of their houses. Crosby worked as an architect until her retirement in 1930. While some buildings where Crosby worked may still stand, her home, modified by her own design efforts, is most closely associated with her life and times.

The Crosby House, built c.1867, is significant under Criterion C as one of Fort Wayne's finest wood-frame, three bay, gable-front Italianate houses. It has a steep roof and massing that was influenced by the Gothic Revival style. The Crosby House is located near the southern edge of development of the city in 1867, and it stands out among the surrounding houses for its fine Italianate details. The house was slightly altered by the addition of Craftsman features c.1915, undoubtedly designed by Grace Crosby.

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

Criterion B:

Grace Crosby contributed significantly to the character of Fort Wayne's residential architecture during a critical period in the growth of the city. She practiced with the Wildwood Builders firm, a company that not just designed houses, but shaped entire neighborhoods in Fort Wayne. Specifically, as an architectural designer, Crosby helped design the more than 300 houses built by the company. While Grace E. Crosby is most closely associated with Fort Wayne's Wildwood Builders (from about 1909 to about 1916) she worked in the field of architecture and design in Fort Wayne for many years, and for other employers. The 1894-1895 Fort Wayne city directory lists her employment (at age 20) as a "tracer" (a reference to tracing architectural plans). Crosby's specific employer was not listed. The city directory listings for single women are inconsistent; however, it is likely that Crosby continued to gain architectural experience in the 1890s. In 1898 the directory listed her as a "clerk". In the 1900 city directory she was listed as a "draughtswoman" for Alfred Grindle. Again, in 1905, Crosby was listed as "draughtswoman, Grindle." It is likely that Grace Crosby worked for Alfred Grindle from c.1894 to c.1909.

Grindle himself worked as a draftsman in the office of the local firm Wing & Mahurin before he established his own practice in Fort Wayne in the early 1890s. The apprenticeship system, working as a "draftsman," was the most common method of architectural training in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Grindle also had a brief partnership with Charles Weatherhogg during the period that Grace Crosby worked in this office. Grindle worked extensively in Muncie but may have maintained offices in Fort Wayne throughout the period. By c.1909 Crosby would have been thoroughly trained in a broad architectural practice.

In 1900 attorney Lee J. Ninde returned to Fort Wayne with his new bride, Joel Roberts Ninde. They had intended to live on his family's estate, "Wildwood". Joel, a native of Mobile, Alabama, refused to live in the Italianate house; she found it dark and drafty. She proceeded to design their own house which was built on the grounds of Wildwood. She was self-taught, and after designing her house, she began designing houses for friends and family in popular styles of the period. Her goal was to design well laid out, affordable, attractive homes that kept the housekeeper in mind.

Joel's great success with her designs led her husband, Lee J. Ninde, to form Wildwood Builders Company in 1910. Grace Crosby had joined the business as Joel's design partner c.1909. Together they formed their own architecture and interior design practice. Joel and Grace offered the design and construction skills, while Lee Ninde, who had left his successful career as an attorney to start the firm, understood how to conduct business in Fort Wayne. During the early years of Wildwood Builders, Louise Josephine Pellens was also employed by the company. A Fort Wayne native, Pellens was a 1909 architecture graduate at the University of Illinois. She assisted at Wildwood builders from c.1909 to early 1912.

Through Wildwood Builders, Ninde and Crosby created numerous Colonial Revival and Craftsman style houses with innovative features that appealed to housewives; according to an Indianapolis newspaper article they designed and built over 300 houses by 1914. Examples of houses designed by Grace Crosby while working as an architect for Wildwood Builders can be

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found in several Fort Wayne neighborhoods such as the historic South Wayne neighborhood, where the highest concentration of their designs is located.

Wildwood Builders also published the *Wildwood Magazine*, a nationally known publication about architecture, city planning and interior design, from 1913-1917. Grace Crosby provided illustrations, art and articles that enhanced the magazine. Wildwood Builders also published, in 1912, a book of home plans by Ninde and Crosby titled: "Wildwood Homes: Being a Collection of Houses and Details with suggestions for the Home builder." The magazine and the book were published and distributed nationally. The success that Wildwood Builders enjoyed by 1914, was largely in part due to these two women. Joel Ninde died of a stroke in 1916 at age 42, abruptly ending this most prolific partnership.

The 1910 Fort Wayne city directory lists Grace E. Crosby for the first time as "Architect, Wildwood Builders." She continued with this title (with one listing as a "clerk" in 1913) through the 1915 directory. One interesting byline in the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette in 1913 states "Excavation has been started on the home of Miss Grace Crosby, an architect for the Wildwood builders. The house is to be located on Webster street near Shawnee place. It will has six rooms and a bath, furnace and other modern conveniences. It will cost \$4,000."² There is, however, no indication in the public record that Crosby ever lived anywhere else than the family home on DeWald Street. Whether the report of her building a house is an error (she may have been supervising the project) or whether she did indeed start to build, only to stop for reasons now unclear and turn the effort over to Wildwood Builders for sale, remains unknown.

The 1914 newspaper announcement of the founding of Wildwood Builders clarified the experience of each design partner: "Mrs. Ninde has been engaged in architectural and building work for the past nine years. Miss Crosby, before assuming a position with the Wildwood Builders company, had an experience of twelve years with several of the leading architects of the state."³ While Joel Ninde drew most of the accolades (and was the wife of the main financial business partner, Lee Ninde), Crosby's experience was more professional and longer in duration.

In the 1916 directory Grace was listed as an "architect," however no company or firm was listed. One Fort Wayne directory (1917) confirms that Crosby briefly had her own architectural practice in the city. In 1917, she was listed as "Grace E. Crosby, Architect, 409 E. Berry Street, boards 413 W. DeWald." This is corroborated by a *Journal Gazette* snippet of November 1916, stating that Crosby has taken a room in the old Randall homestead as her architectural office.⁴ During World War I, several local architects were either enlisted in the U.S. Army or were in Washington, D.C assisting with the war effort. Combined with the death of Joel Ninde, the war may have provided Grace Crosby with a brief opportunity to practice on her own.

In the 1918 city directory Crosby was listed as "Designer, Steele-Myers Department Store, 113-117 W. Berry." This was likely a position as a display designer, and perhaps as an interior designer. By 1919 Crosby had returned to a position that more closely matched her skills. She was employed as a "Draftsman" for the Bowser Pump Company.

² No Title, *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, May 11, 1913, p. 41.

³ "Ft. Wayne Women Form New Architect Company," *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, April 19, 1914, p. 49.

⁴ "Miss Grace Crosby," *Fort Wayne News and Sentinel*, November 15, 1916, p. 6. The old Randall home has been demolished.

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The Bowser Pump Company was founded in 1885 by Sylvanus Freeloove Bowser, a Fort Wayne native. He was an inventor who is credited with inventing the self-measuring gasoline pump and other equipment for filling stations. His invention and formation of his company brought opportunities of work for many men and women in Fort Wayne. Bowser Pump had an active in-house design department; it designed commercial and industrial equipment, but Bowser also provided innovative and stylish filling station designs to customers. An in-house printing department produced beautifully illustrated catalogs and corporate publications, often with renderings of state-of-the-art filling stations. According to her employment history, it appears that Grace Crosby found her space at Bowser during a brief period during and after World War I.

Grace Crosby resumed her more conventional architectural career with local architects Chauncey Griffith and D. Parsons Goodrich. By 1921 Crosby was employed as "Draftsman, Griffith & Goodrich." Through 1927 Crosby was listed alternatively in city directories as either a "draftsman" or "architect" for Griffith & Goodrich. Local buildings designed by the firm during this period include the Franklin Public School (demolished) and South Side High School.

Although city directories do not list Crosby's employment after 1927, she likely completed her career working for architect Leroy Bradley. The pair worked together at Griffith & Goodrich, but Bradley formed the firm of Bradley and Babcock in 1927. Grace Crosby's obituary says that she "was a retired architect and had been employed by the Wildwood Builders and the late Leroy Bradley."⁵ In 1929 the firm of Bradley and Babcock designed two well-known local landmarks, the Fort Wayne Engraving Co., 120 W. Superior, and Bethany Hall in the 800 block of West Rudisill Boulevard (demolished).

Crosby retired in 1930 (according to her obituary) after working over 35 years in the architectural field; she was approximately 56 years old. The Indiana Architectural Act was passed by the state legislature on March 9, 1929. The act specified that after September 1, 1929, it would be illegal to practice architecture in the state without being duly registered and granted a certificate. This first licensing system for Indiana architects was effective only months prior to her retirement. Also, Grace's mother died November 30, 1929. Perhaps both developments were factors in Crosby's decision to retire from architecture. Grace Crosby continued to live at 413 W. DeWald until her death in 1962 at the age of 88. It is the only home she ever knew.

Although other women practiced architecture in Indiana in the early Twentieth Century, the evidence strongly suggests Grace Crosby was the only one who had a long and complete career in architecture; she practiced in Fort Wayne, from c.1894 to her retirement in 1930. She was also significant for her major contributions to the work of Joel Ninde and the story of Wildwood Builders.

The earliest female architects to practice in Indianapolis were Jessie Gibson and Edith Leonard. Both were contemporaries of Crosby, but it is not known if each of these architects had a full-length career. Juliet Peddle (1899-1979) is recognized as the first (licensed) female architect in Indiana; she obtained her license in 1939, nine years after Grace Crosby retired.

⁵ "Grace E. Crosby (obituary)," *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, May 18, 1962.

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Criterion C:

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The Grace E. Crosby House, built c.1867, also meets Criterion C for architectural significance. It is an excellent local example of a Gable-front Italianate house. It has a steep roof and massing that shows influence from the Gothic Revival style. Although other Gable-front Italianate style houses are found in Fort Wayne, in both brick and wood, the style is rarely so intact in the wood-frame examples.⁶ The architectural significance of the house is enhanced by the addition of both exterior and interior Craftsman features (c.1915) undoubtedly designed by Grace Crosby herself.

Andrew Jackson Downing promoted both the Italianate and Gothic Revival cottages through his architectural pattern books, such as *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1851). Both the Gothic Revival and the Italianate were romantic styles that complimented wooded suburban lots with verticality and organic ornamentation. These styles were common in Fort Wayne from c.1840 into the 1870s, although Italianate was far more common than Gothic Revival. The Crosby House is on a relatively small urban lot, however at the time of its construction c.1867 this location was at the extreme south edge of Fort Wayne's development. This was one of the earliest houses built in the plat.

The typical Gothic Revival house has a steeply pitched roof; that massing can be seen in the Crosby House. The front gable roof has a steep pitch that extends downward to create a massing of 1 ½ stories, although the height of the ridge would have suggested a two-story house. The Crosby House retains the fine Italianate detailing that has rarely survived in Fort Wayne's nineteenth-century neighborhoods. The house has open eaves with dentils, paired scroll-cut brackets, and window and door openings with pedimented hoods and decorative ears. The windows in the Palladian arrangement on the second floor are an unusual feature in Fort Wayne examples, and a striking detail of the Crosby House. The Crosby House is Fort Wayne's best remaining example of a wood-frame Italianate cottage so effectively influenced by the work of Andrew Jackson Downing.

The architectural significance of the Grace Crosby House is enhanced by the Craftsman features added c.1915. Because Grace Crosby was a practicing architect at that time, and near the height of her career, it is safe to say she designed and supervised the Craftsman-era changes to the house. The primary alteration was the addition of a comfortable, large, and long porch to the east side of the house. The second floor, front bedroom was improved by the addition of a west-side shed-roof dormer with Craftsman windows and wood-shingle siding. A small closet was also added to the bedroom as part of the south dormer. The first-floor interior of the house also saw changes. The original stairs to the second floor was removed; the width of the new stairs was expanded, and the arrangement of the new stairs was reconfigured. The balustrades are in a common Craftsman style that is typical for Craftsman homes. The new stairs and balustrades are seamlessly integrated with the original steps and balustrade for the

⁶ The Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory / SHAARD database, when queried for "gable front" in "Fort Wayne" returned over 500 entries. However, when pared down to "gable front, Italianate" only 11 examples were returned, most being in the West Washington Street Historic District. Reviewing a general source like the *Panoramic View of the City of Fort Wayne*, 1880 or the *Bird's-eye view of the City of Fort Wayne*, 1868 show many hundreds of gable-front houses. Attrition to demolition/redevelopment and fire has greatly reduced their number.

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last run of the stairs to the second floor. The plan book for Wildwood Builders includes designs for twenty houses, of which sixteen have staircases with multiple landings and switchbacks.⁷ The design element of a “starter flight” – a short stair run that cascades into a main living space, such as was installed at the Grace Crosby House, is a common motif in the Wildwood booklet.

While there are no primary sources to document that Crosby designed the changes to the house herself, the details of the changes offer close parallels to known Ninde-Crosby designs. The square Doric columns of the porch, for example, are proportioned and detailed in similar fashion to those on known Wildwood Builder-designed houses, such as those in the Brookview-Irvington Historic District in Fort Wayne, at 2704, 2714, 2724, and 3734 N. Clinton. The entablature and boxed cornice treatments are also similar. Other elements used in the remodeling of the Crosby House can be seen on the Ninde-Mead-Farnsworth House in Fort Wayne, another known Ninde-Crosby design (c.1910). The use of long shed dormers with grouped windows and enclosed eaves is markedly similar to the added dormer on the Crosby House. The Wildwood plan book shows a number of similar dormers as well. The interior of the Ninde-Mead-Farnsworth House includes French doors to add light to rooms, another remodeling item found in the Crosby House. While individually, such changes might be interpreted as standard alterations of the period, taken together, they are hallmarks of Wildwood Builder houses. They also address Joel Ninde’s complaints about 19th century houses: the added windows and French doors lighten the interior, while the added storm doors and windows blocked drafts. The large porch, conspicuously absent from 19th century houses of this type in Fort Wayne, added a comfortable touch that fit with Craftsman sensibilities about outdoor living.

While many Italianate homes of this type might be somewhat diminished by the Craftsman alterations, the Crosby House is enhanced in its architectural significance due to the features that were undoubtedly designed and added by Grace Crosby. Even with the Craftsman modifications, the house is a locally significant example of an Italianate cottage.

The house has excellent historic integrity; the long-term ownership history of the house by only three families has certainly contributed to its preservation.

⁷ *Wildwood Homes, Being a collection of houses and details with suggestions for the home builder*, Fort Wayne, IN: Wildwood Builders, 1912.

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Developmental History/Additional historic context information

Grace Crosby's parents, George and Naomi Crosby, purchased lot 11 in Tyler's Addition from Mary Rockhill Tyler in the 1860s. The Crosbys appear at this location in the 1868-1869 Fort Wayne city directory. (At the time the block was "Henry Street," but it was later renamed as DeWald Street.) In the prior directory of 1866-1867 the Crosbys are listed at 106 W. Washington Blvd; thus indicating the house was built c.1867. In subsequent years the house was assigned the address of 15 Henry Street, and later 111 W. DeWald Street. All addresses in Fort Wayne were reassigned in 1902, and the house has been 413 W. Dewald St. since that time.

George and Naomi Crosby had three children: William, Mabel and Grace, who was born in 1874. George Crosby worked as a machinist for the Wabash Railroad. Mabel and Grace never married, and while Grace became an architect, Mabel had a long career as a public school teacher in Fort Wayne. They both lived in the home with their mother until her death in 1929. The sisters inherited the home. Mabel passed before Grace, and Grace Crosby remained in the house until she passed in 1962. It had remained in the Crosby family for its first 95 years.

The house was purchased in 1962 by Maria and Joseph Blasko, recent immigrants from Hungary. They came to Fort Wayne in 1959 in a refugee resettlement program, after spending several years in a refugee camp in Austria. They had fled Hungary during the revolution in 1956. In 1962, Maria's son, Steve Tibor Nagy, was engaged to Siegrid Tagtmeyer, possibly a distant cousin of Grace Crosby. Through this family connection, the Blaskos knew the home was to be sold with all its contents. They were able to acquire the home and its furnishings from the estate of Grace Crosby. The wedding of Siegrid and Steve Nagy was held in the back yard of the home in 1963.

Maria Blasko survived Joseph and continued to live in the home until her death in 2002. She left the Grace E Crosby House to her grandson, Steven J. Nagy. After 60 years of ownership by only the second family, the house was sold to its third family on February 2, 2022. The long-term ownership of the house by only the Crosby and Nagy families is evidenced in the historic integrity of the Grace Crosby House.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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<https://indianalandmarks.org/2017/05/bowser-building/> accessed April 18, 2023.

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"Girl Architects Organize a Firm," *New York Times*, March 8, 1914, p. 15. (regarding claim to first women's architecture practice. Schenck & Mead, cited in article, clearly preceded Wildwood and Mead "went through" Columbia University School of Architecture).

"Grace E. Crosby (obituary)," *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, May 18, 1962, p. 2.

"Mrs. Joel Roberts Ninde of Ft. Wayne Broadened Her Womanly Sphere by Becoming an Architect and the Creator of Fair 'Honeymoon Row'." *Indianapolis News*, November 7, 1914, p. 13.

"Miss Grace Crosby," *Fort Wayne News and Sentinel*, November 15, 1916, p. 6. (article notes that Crosby has taken a room in the old Randall homestead for her architectural office)

National Register of Historic Places documents (properties containing Wildwood Builders houses):

Baas, Christopher. *Illsley Place-West Rudisill Historic District*, Allen County, Indiana. Listed April 21, 2006.

Caviston, Margaret; Michael Galbraith; and Angie Quinn. *Lafayette Place Historic District*, Allen County, Indiana. Listed January 9, 2013.

Downs, Jill. *Ninde-Mead-Farnsworth House*, Allen County, Indiana. Listed March 20, 2013.

Downs, Jill and Andrew. *Shawnee Place Historic District*, Allen County, Indiana. Listed August 28, 2024.

Kurt West Garner. *Northwood Historic District*, Allen County, Indiana. Written March 20 2026, pending approval for listing.

Quinn, Angie. *Brookview-Irvington Park Historic District*, Allen County, Indiana, Listed March 21, 2011.

Quinn, Angie. *Wildwood Park Historic District*, Allen County, Indiana, Listed September 18, 2013.

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Schweikert, Carol Ann. *Forest Park Boulevard Historic District*, Allen County, Indiana. Listed March 30, 2007.

Thayer, Laura. *South Wayne Historic District*, Allen County, Indiana. Listed September 4, 1992.

No Title, *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, May 11, 1913, p. 41. (untitled brief article stating Crosby is building a home on Webster St. near Shawnee Place).

Two Fort Wayne Women Put their Stamp of House Design. Indiana Landmarks website. New. March/April 2020. <https://indianalandmarks.org/2020/03/two-fort-wayne-women-put-their-stamp-of-house-design/>

"Will Indy's First Female Architect Please Stand Up?" Historic Indianapolis website. <https://historicindianapolis.com/indysearliest-female-architects/> Accessed April 18, 2023.

Wildwood Homes, Being a collection of houses and details with suggestions for the home builder. Fort Wayne, IN: Wildwood Builders, 1912.

The Wildwood Magazine. Fort Wayne, IN: Wildwood Builders, 1913-1917.

The Wildwood Editorial Staff. "Wildwood News and Views," *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, July 5, 1914, p. 35. Includes notes on development and new houses in area now known as Northwood Historic District, Shawnee Place Historic District, and Wildwood Park Historic District.

Williams & Co. *Williams' Ft. Wayne Directory for 1868-9*. Fort Wayne, IN: N.P. Stockbridge, 1868 <https://archive.org/details/fortwayneindian18681869rlpo/page/76/mode/2up?q=crosby> Accessed April 18, 2023.

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 003-215-55491

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

Use the UTM system

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 16	Easting: 655988	Northing: 4547622
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:

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

The East six (6) feet of lot 10 and lot 11 in Tylers addition to the city of Fort Wayne according to the recorded plat book 0B page 76 thereof, Allen County, Indiana.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the parcel historically associated with the Crosby House

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Carmen R Seidlitz/owner; with Creager Smith/HP Planner, City of Fort Wayne
organization: A2Z Home LLC
street & number: 2342 Peet Ln
city or town: Escondido state: CA zip code: 92025
e-mail carmen.seidlitz@gmail.com
telephone: 619 517 8542
date: May 28, 2024

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

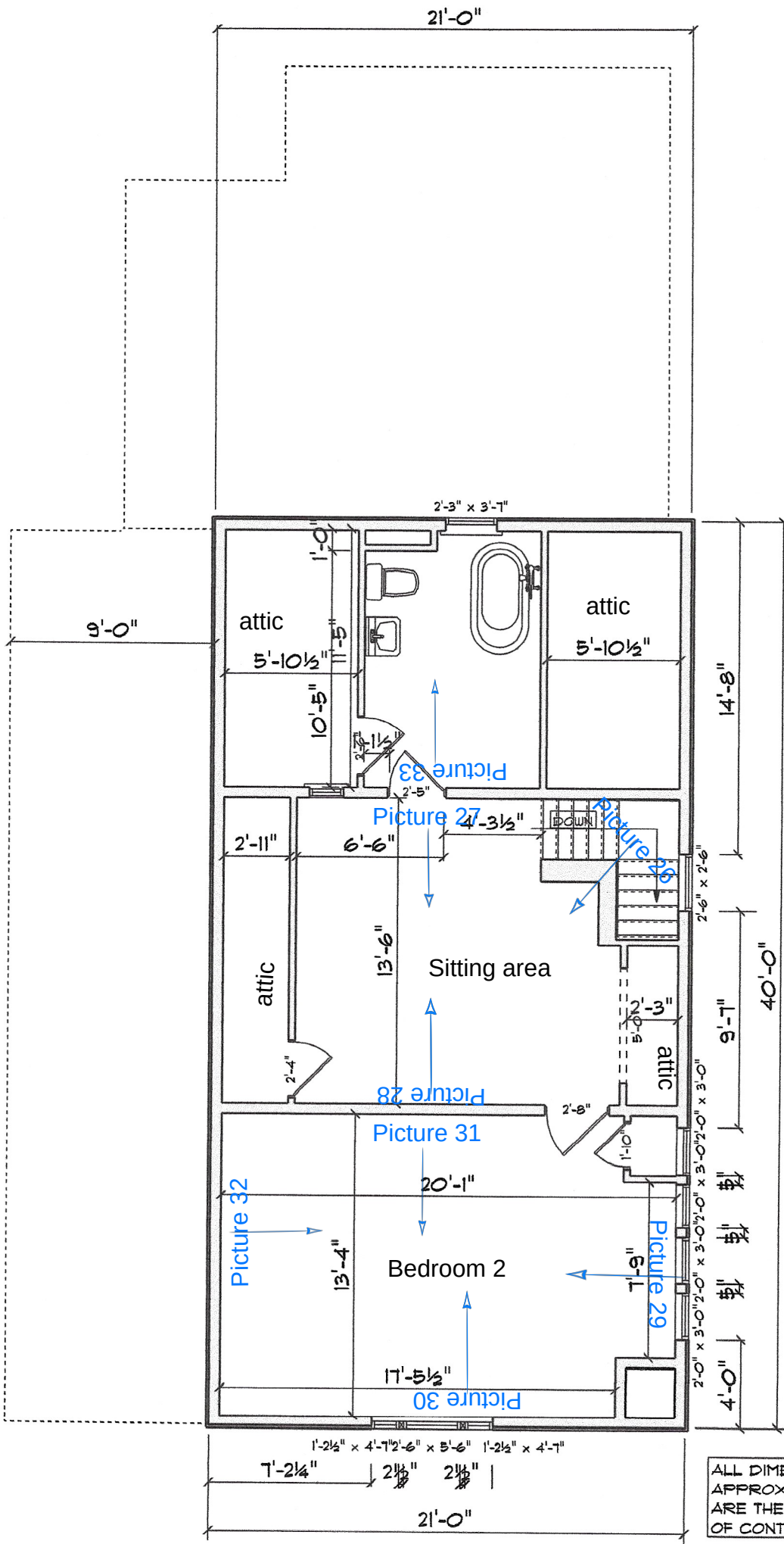
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the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

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.



These plans are not drawn by a licensed architect or engineer, therefore it is the responsibility of the owner and contractor to review the plans and verify that all plans are correct as drawn and the project conforms to all applicable codes. I, Bette L. Schuetz, LLC do not assume any liability for any omissions or errors in the drawing or engineering of these plans. It shall be the contractors responsibility to have all materials, windows, beams and foundations/footings properly sized and to code.



These plans are not drawn by a licensed architect or engineer, therefore it is the responsibility of the owner and contractor to review the plans and verify that all plans are correct as drawn and the project conforms to all applicable codes. I, Bette L. Schuette, LLC do not assume any liability for any omissions or errors in the drawing or engineering of these plans. It shall be the contractors responsibility to have all materials, windows, beams and foundations/footings properly sized and to code.

North

ALL DIMENSIONS ARE APPROXIMATE AND ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONTRACTOR TO VERIFY



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0002



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0004



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0006



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0009



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0011



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0012



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0023



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0024



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0025



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0027



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0028



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0033



IN_Allencounty_TheGraceCrosbyHouse_0037