NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Martin Van Buren Parker House

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 631 W. Park ☐ not for publication

city, town Olathe ☐ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Johnson code 091 zip code 66061

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property
[X] private	[X] building(s)
[ ] public-local	[ ] district
[ ] public-State	[ ] site
[ ] public-Federal	[ ] structure
	[ ] object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Ramon Powers — August 27, 1988

Signature of certifying official — Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register.
[ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[ ] removed from the National Register.

[ ] other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic; Single dwelling;
Residence

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic; Single dwelling,
Residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Stick/Eastlake:
Eastern Stick

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: limestone
walls Wood: weatherboard
roof Asphalt
other Metal: cast iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Martin Van Buren Parker House (c. 1869-1880) is located at 631 W. Park in Olathe, Johnson County, Kansas (pop. 37,258). The two-story, frame house sits on a rusticated limestone block foundation. The building has a northern facade orientation and measures approximately one hundred feet from east to west and twenty-eight feet from north to south. The form of the building is comprised of a squarish, truncated hipped roof unit that has lower cross gables projecting from its east and west elevations. A one-bay, gabled entry pavilion projects from the eastern bay of the center unit. A one-story bay projects from the center of the southern elevation and a short, two-story kitchen extends from the southwest corner of the building. A full basement runs beneath the western half of the house, a crawl space runs beneath the eastern half.

The building is sheathed with cedar lap siding. Attenuated corner posts with fluted shafts and doric capitals terminate the corners on all elevations of the building except the rear kitchen wing, where less stylized corner posts are employed. Wide, bracketted eaves mark the house on all elevations but the kitchen wing. New composition shingling covers the main roof. The original iron cresting completes the ridge lines of the truncated hipped roof. Brick chimneys rise from the center unit and from the two cross gables. A lathe turned spindle and spool wooden porch decorates the center unit on the facade elevation, it retains its wooden fishscale shingling and iron roof cresting.

Fenestration on the building is primarily 1/1 double hung, grouped individually and paired. A 2/2 double hung treatment is employed for the kitchen wing. Fluted stiles and classical architraves form the surrounds for most windows. The two cross gables, the gabled entry pavilion, and the three gabled roof dormers all share the fishscaled shingled gable face and a truss at the peak of the gable. Several window bays project from the main body of the house.

In 1981 the house was restored to an excellent condition and maintains a very high degree of architectural and structural integrity. Major exterior projects include the shoring up of the front porch and replacing the rotted floor. Any porch elements that were rotted or missing were milled using original pieces as patterns. The limestone block foundation was repointed. The shutters, which were original to the house and served a functional purpose, were discarded. Many of the shutters were missing or rotten and a decision was made not to replace them. The body of the house, which had been painted white for atleast fifteen years, was repainted in four shades of grey.

[X] See continuation sheet

The interior of the house maintains its period floorplan. A front parlour leads from the western wall of the slightly off-centered entry hall. A library abuts the parlour on the west and the dining room and kitchen on the south. A rear parlour and a study stand to the south and east of the entry hall. A curved and cantilevered walnut staircase graces the center hall. It leads to the second floor where a center hall connects the bedrooms at either end of the hall with the north and south bedrooms. A narrow back staircase leads down to the kitchen from the low ceilinged second story wing.

Period woodwork is retained throughout the house. Much of the wood is pine although oak floors were overlaid on the first floor. The doors and windows have classically moulded surrounds with bull's eye corner blocks. The four-panel doors are transomed. Classically inspired baseboard and cornice mouldings grace the first floor, a simpler baseboard treatment and no cornice moulding is employed on the second floor.

The transomed double door that leads into the house retains its spooled, Eastlake wooden panels and clear glass surmounting panels. An etched glass transom surmounts the door, its cracks are repaired with lead. A classical and Eastlakian newel post graces the bracketted front staircase.

There are two fireplaces on the first floor. A marble mantle and geometric tiled hearth stand in the library. A steel mantle painted to resemble marble and a geometric tiled hearth stand in the rear parlour.

A modern kitchen and bathroom and a new heating system were added to the house in the 1960s. The library was also panelled at this time. In 1981 air conditioning and new furnaces were installed.

Period hardware is retained throughout the house, evidenced in hinges, door knobs, window mechanisms, heat grates and the like.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☒ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1869-1880	
Commerce	1869-1922	

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Significant Person: Martin Van Buren Parker

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Martin Van Buren Parker House (c. 1869-1880) is being nominated to the National Register under criteria B and C for its historical associations with Olathe lawyer, real estate/insurance broker, and farmer Martin Van Buren Parker (1840-1922) and for its architectural significance as a vernacular adaptation of the Eastern Stick Style with some Eastlake embellishments. The house derives its architectural significance not so much from the fact that it is an example of the Eastern Stick Style but that it is intact and well maintained in a community that has not been kind to its historic built resources.

The house was constructed for Martin Van Buren Parker and his wife Emma sometime after Emma's 1869 purchase of four lots from their friends Robert and Celestia Stevenson. This land was part of the Stevenson Addition to Olathe, which as shown on the Sanborn maps of Olathe as early as 1887 but the individual lots were never detailed until the 1938 edition, at which time the plan of the Parker House is shown. A house was likely standing on the property prior to 1874, as Parker's 1922 obituary cites his residency in his house for more than half a century and as the 1874 Atlas of Johnson County includes a line drawing of the Martin Van Buren Parker House. That drawing, however, shows a house of somewhat smaller proportions, with a different roof line and different fenestration and door placement. Although the veracity of the line drawing may be questioned it also brings up the possibility of later alterations to the house. The house may have been modified in the 1880s to its present appearance, as certain features, such as the Eastlake porch and the fishscale shingling in the gables seem a little too early for an 1869-1874 construction date. Additionally, the roof configuration and stilted proportions of the building lead one to wonder if the original house was extensively modified. However, there is no conclusive evidence found from an inspection of either the foundation or the attic, and exterior and interior mouldings and surrounds are all compatible. The same clapboarding and window types are used throughout the building as well. Flooring on the first floor has been replaced several times but wide floor boards remain extant on the second floor. Unfortunately the last Parker child (b. 1875) to grow up in the house died in 1971, so oral accounts of changes to the property would be impossible to obtain.

☒ See continuation sheet

Regardless of any possible changes, the house has been proven to retain its integrity to 1906, the date of the earliest photograph yet available of the house.

Parker and his wife Emma moved to Olathe from Lee's Summit, Missouri in 1868 or 1869. Parker and Emma were Illinois natives who met while Parker was attending Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois. Parker graduated in 1864 and then attended law school in Albany, New York, graduating in 1866. He established one of Olathe's first law firms with his brother-in-law John P. St. John in 1868 or 1869 but dissolved this association in 1876. St. John served as Kansas' eighth governor and ran as the Prohibition party's candidate for president in 1884. Parker continued his law, real estate/insurance, and farming businesses until his death, joining forces with A.J. Smith in 1882 or 1883 and then later with his son-in-law, Samuel Brockway. At one time Parker owned seven hundred acres of cultivated farmland in Johnson County. An 1882 issue of the Olathe Mirror cites wheat growing over six feet tall on the Parker farm. The 1908-1909 Olathe City Directory lists Parker-Brockway Investment Company as real estate and insurance special agents for land in Red River, Texas and also as a firm that handled loans, insurance, and real estate.

Emma Parker was a life-long homemaker and charter member of the Ladies Reading Circle, which she founded with Mrs. Celestia Stevenson and Mrs. I.O. Pickering in 1883. The club was the first women's club in Olathe (est. 1857) and one of the first in Kansas. The Ladies Reading Circle was influential in acquiring a grant from the Carnegie Corporation for the first Olathe public library, this building was demolished in the 1960s.

The Parker Pasture, just east of the house was said to be the location of the summer Chautaugua in Olathe, although no exact dates for the Olathe Chautauguas have been established.

Of the Parker's five children, May, Effie, Luella, Zula, and Zella, only Luella married. All of the daughters besides Luella resided in the house until their deaths, with the exception of Zula, who sold the house in 1960. The house slowly deteriorated over the next twenty years, however, unlike many of the fine nineteenth century homes in Olathe, it was not torn down. In 1981 the current owners purchased the house and restored it to a good condition, replicating material that had rotted away, such as the porch. While the house does hold several mysteries about its true construction dates and possible early alterations, it stands as an example of residential architectural styling of the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

The Martin Van Buren Parker House is a vernacular interpretation of the Eastern Stick style with some Eastlake embellishments. Its interpretation of the Eastern Stick style is not fully developed and really is only identifiable by the surface ornamentation: the trusses in the gables, the wide, bracketted eaves, the cornerpost delineation, and the fact that it is constructed of wood. The Eastlake spindle porch is an element more frequently found on Queen Anne houses; a truer Eastern Stick style interpretation would have employed diagonal or curved porch braces. This house does not share the verticality and ornamental structural delineation of textbook examples of the Eastern Stick style. Additionally, the form and massing of the building makes it a transitional example, as its hipped roof with lower cross gables is a form characteristic of the succeeding Queen Anne style.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Andreas, A. T. History of the State of Kansas. (Chicago: Andreas, 1883).

Heisler and Co. Johnson County Atlas. (Wyandotte, Ks: Heisler, 1874).

Miles, Forrest. "Martin Van Buren Parker House," (National Register nomination draft, 1988).

Olathe City Directory, 1908-1909.

Olathe Mirror, 15 June, 1882; 16 November, 1922; 21 July, 1932; 29 August, 1957.

Souvenir Book of Olathe and Johnson County. 1907.

☐ See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: Kansas State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: Less than 1 acre

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	15	341260	4305162
B			
C			
D			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on Parker Place, Lot 3 and W25' N130' Lot 4 in Olathe, Johnson County, Kansas. The property is bounded to the north by W. Park, to the west by Troost, and to the east and south by adjacent property lines.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the nominated building but does not include all land historically associated with it. The garage that stands on the property is not included in this nomination.

☐ See continuation sheet

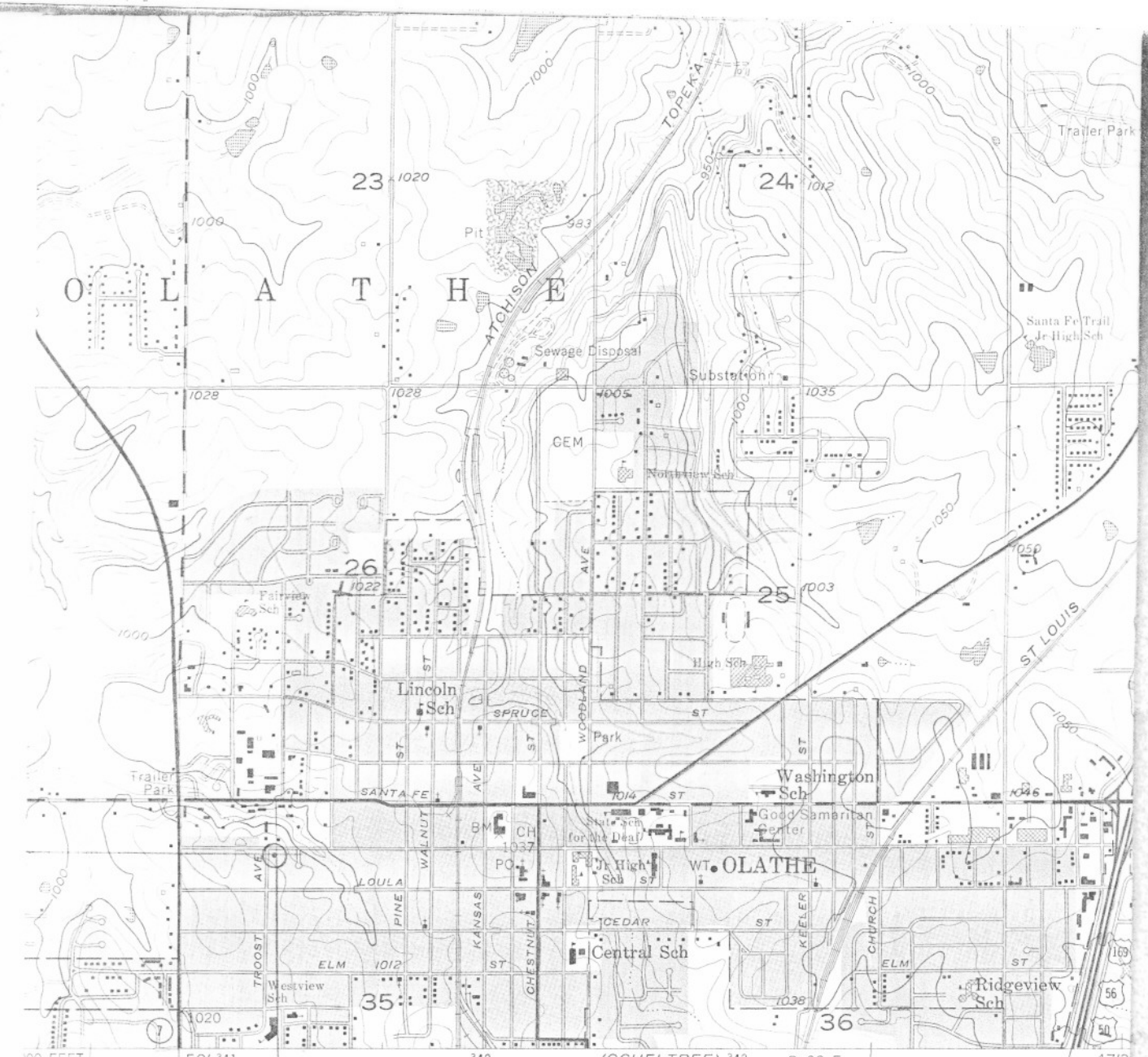
11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian

organization: Kansas State Historical Society date: August 25, 1988

street & number: 120 W. 10th telephone: 913 296-5264

city or town: Topeka state: Kansas zip code: 66612



MARTIN VAN BUREN
PARKER HOUSE
OLATHE, KANSAS
UTM Coordinates
15 341260 4305162

6½°
16 MILS

MAGNETIC NORTH
NTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
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