

828 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway (Cottage)
Des Moines
Polk County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-192

HABS
IOWA
77-DESMO,
26-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

COTTAGE

HABS No. IA-192

HABS
IOWA
77-DESMO,
26-

Historic Name: COTTAGE

Location: 828 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway
Des Moines, IA 50314

Leyner's Plat of Town Lots and Streets
Lot 5
Block C

Present Owner: City of Des Moines, Iowa
400 East 1st Street
Des Moines, IA 50307

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Vacant

Statement of
Significance:

Constructed in 1890 and located near the Sherman Historic District, the architecture of this cottage is significant because it calls attention to a vernacular design influenced by Queen Anne taste. This cottage also illustrates one type of affordable housing being constructed in Des Moines during the boom years of the early Twentieth Century. The expectations of middle-class homeowners had risen in the city by this time, as is attested the presence of the bathroom on the second floor and decorative woodwork on the first floor, features which would not have been found in comparable housing of an earlier generation. By the same token, the modest architecture of this cottage also shows how land use affected the quality of town lot improvements. In this instance, the presence of a nearby cemetery depressed the improvement of lots on its fringes, while lots located in neighboring Sherman Hill were more extensively upbuilt. Finally, this cottage is significant because it provides one example of a little documented property type in Des Moines--the "house to rent." Originally constructed for David L. Jewett, lumber merchant of Des Moines, this cottage was built as an investment to provide for and profit from rental housing, which was in short supply during the boom years of the 1890s in the city. As such, the building relates in function to its neighbor to the north, 832 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway (HABS IA-191).

Prepared by: William C. Page, Public Historian
Des Moines, IA

I

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. PHYSICAL HISTORY:

1. Date(s) of Erection

1890.

2. Architect

Unknown.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners

[This property has also been known historically as 826 and 848 21st Street, 846 G Street, and 828 Harding Road.]

Samuel R. Sublett, occupant, stairbuilder (1892 city directory).

Albert Hornerman, occupant, blacksmith (1900 city directory).

Letta A. Wilson, dressmaker (1908 city directory).

4. Builders, Contractors, Suppliers

Jewett Lumber Company of Des Moines, Iowa, is thought to have supplied the building materials.

5. Original Plans and Construction Drawings

Unknown.

6. Alterations and Additions

Replacement columns on front porch, addition of rear wing.

B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

Historical context for this resource is discussed in Chapter III of this report, beginning on page 8.

II

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Architectural Merit and Interest

This cottage is of architectural interest because of its proximity to the Sherman Hill Historic District and because it illustrates an affordable house constructed from vernacular design during the boom years in Des Moines' growth during the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century.

2. Condition of Fabric

Fair (to be demolished).

3. Summary Description

This is a frame, single-family dwelling. The resource contains a 1-1/2 story main house, whose footprint measures approximately 24' x 44', including porches and rear wing.

B. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR

1. Foundation

Cement parging over unknown material.
Footing materials unknown.

2. Wall Construction

Bevel wood siding.
Vertical corner boards.

3. Structural Systems

Balloon wood frame construction.

4. Porches, Stoops, Etc.

Unenclosed front porch with softwood floorboards, covered with hip roof and supported by modern 2 x 4 wood members.

Present rear wing, covered by shed roof, replaced former rear porch, whose shed roof outline is now visible under ceiling.

5. Openings, Doorways, and Windows

Two front doorways in ell on south and east elevations under front porch, each with transom.

Wooden, 2/2 panelled front door on east elevation.
Front door on south elevation removed.

Back doorway on west elevation.
Back door on west elevation removed.

Side doorway on north elevation.
Wooden, back door with 5 horizontal panels on north elevation.

2/2 double-hung sash windows, generally.
One large-pane window on east elevation with upper section worked in diamond pattern.

Several small single-pane windows.

Several windows have storm windows with matching pane configurations.

No shutters.

6. Roof

Cross-gable roof over main house.
Shed roof over enclosed rear porch.

All roofs covered with asphalt shingles.

Medium width eaves surrounding main house.

No cornices.

Gabled dormer window on north slope of lower gable roof over rear wing.

7. Chimneys

One interior brick chimney (now truncated), located on south slope of front gable about 12 feet from face of east elevation.

Exterior wall, metal flue on north elevation about 16 feet from face of east elevation.

C. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR

1. Floor Plans

4 rooms and enclosed porch on Floor 1 (parlor, living room, dining room, and kitchen).
4 rooms on Floor 2 (bedrooms). Bathroom on Floor 2 located in dormer window.
Hatchway door in ceiling of Floor 2 hallway to access attic.
Half basement, approximately 400 square feet.

2. Stairways

Box stair, accessed on Floor 1 from both living room and enclosed porch, with landing as first step.
Doorway from enclosed porch appears to be alteration to original design.

3. Flooring

Hardwood floorboards on Floor 1.
Softwood floorboards on Floor 2 (appear to be pine).
Concrete floor in basement.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finishes

Plaster finish on Floor 1 and 2 walls and ceilings.
Basement unfinished.

5. Doorways, Doors, and Windows

Doorframes trimmed with decorative molding.
Transoms over front doorframes.
No doors.

Doors mostly removed.
Two wooden, 2/2 panelled doors remain.

Decorative molding on inside casing of window.

6. Interior Trim

Baseboard, decorative base molding, and quarter-round base shoe in each room.
No crown molding between ceiling and walls.

7. Hardware

Removed on Floor 1
Metal doorknobs floral embossed, metal backplates on Floor 2.
Cast iron heat grates have been removed throughout house, one abandoned in backyard.

8. Mechanical and Electrical Equipment

Warm air, base heating.

9. Lighting Fixtures

A few modern fixtures, damaged.

10. Plumbing

Standard modern, vandalized.
Clawfoot bathtub on Floor 2.

D. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1. Orientation and General Setting

Lot measures 50' x 130'.
Level topography.
Lot abuts alley and public cemetery at rear.
House faces east.
Concrete sidewalk.
Paved street with curb and gutters.
Gravel road adjacent to south property line, which is extension of Center Street, curves to north and becomes Kuhn's Alley at rear of property.
Gravel drive to house (becoming gravel pedestrian walk) extends from gravel road

2. Historic Landscape Design

Poured concrete steps and pedestrian walk from sidewalk to front porch.
Concrete steps to porch.
No retaining walls in front yard.
Concrete pedestrian walk from front porch along south elevation to bricked-in scuttle opening to basement.
Sundry trees in backyard, including one mature Walnut at southwest corner.
Lilac shrub near backdoor.
Wire fence running north and south near west property line with volunteer grape vine.

3. Outbuildings

None.

III

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1890, the cottage at 828 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway calls attention, as a good but not outstanding example, to several historic qualities in Des Moines during the Victorian period. Although located outside the boundaries of the nearby Sherman Hill Historic District (listed on the National Register of Historic Places and locally designated as an historic district), this cottage also contributes to that district because of these qualities of significance.

This chapter explicates the significance by evaluating the cottage within the following historic contexts:

Town Building in Des Moines: A Legacy of Laissez Faire

Town Building in Des Moines: Land Use

Architecture of Affordable Housing in Victorian Des Moines

Town building addresses several of the most important aspects of Des Moines' history as a community. During the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, the economic and social principles of laissez faire underlay most building practices in Des Moines and strongly affected the course of the city's upbuilding and improvement.

Patterns of land use also affected this development. In spite of the effects of laissez faire, a number of traditional patterns of land use were observed in Des Moines. These, and a series of new patterns of land use, imparted a certain feeling of uniformity to town building in the city.

During the latter years of the Victorian period, affordable housing emerged as a new property type, replete with comforts previously restricted to the affluent. Although the large homes of the Victorian period have captured popular imagination, this period also saw the construction of numerous cottages for the middle, lower-middle, and lower classes.

Concurrent with the construction of these owner-occupied buildings, local capitalists and real estate investors responded to the city's pressing need for rental housing. While renters previously had been restricted to multiple-family dwellings within the inner city, the affluence of the period and access to public transportation raised the life-style expectations of renters, as well as homeowners. Renters now demanded detached, single-family dwellings, situated on lots removed from the city's congestion. The house to rent emerged as another property type during the period. Popular architectural styles also influenced its design.

B. TOWN BUILDING IN DES MOINES: A LEGACY OF LAISSEZ FAIRE

Introduction

Nineteenth Century Des Moines was characterized by a patchwork quality of urban design. Throughout that period, the economic and political tenets of laissez faire spurred the growth of the city. Unrestricted by municipal ordinances, zoning laws, building codes, or other limits on private initiative, real estate interests subdivided ever smaller tracts of land and developed them for residential purposes, often relying exclusively on economic dictates. As the city's population boomed during the 1880s and 1890s, frenzied real estate speculation swept Des Moines. Hundreds of new plats and thousands of new residential housing units were laid out and constructed. As a general rule, little regard was given to good urban planning.

The acreage of the plats, for example, varied widely. Some large tracts were laid out. In many other instances, the proprietors of large tracts subdivided and sold them to other speculators, who in turn further subdivided them. Parcelization of land resulted.

Within the plats, the size of lots also varied. Some plats included uniform and rather large lots, such as Thompson's Subdivision, located adjacent to West 9th Street (Page and Walroth:Map following E-96). In contrast, the lot sizes in North Park, an area immediately to the south of Thompson's Subdivision, were both narrower and less deep. In Leyner's Plat, the subject of this study, the 50' x 130' lot sizes were uniform, albeit small in width.

This city's street network also illustrates the results of laissez faire practices. Each plat reserved certain areas for streets and alleys, but little attention was paid to conformity. Two adjacent plats might provide traffic corridors that did not meet or varied in width. North Street (now University Avenue) provides a good example. Not until the Twentieth Century was this major east-west artery rationalized into a thoroughfare. By the 1920s, the public recognized the bitter fruits of unregulated development. Hired by the City of Des Moines to study the problem and recommend solutions, Harland Bartholomew, urban planner of St. Louis, Missouri, reported:

Altogether the subdividers of land have thus far platted approximately 1100 "additions" in Des Moines. These operations in actuality are city planning. When the owner of an acreage tract cuts it up into lots and streets he is engaged in a small way in the highly important work of fixing the ultimate character of the city. What he does may be either an advantage or a disadvantage in later years. Under such circumstances it is entirely reasonable to urge that his activities be brought within the purview of municipal authorities. If Des Moines some time ago had appreciated the full significance of the operations of land subdividers it might have reduced the 1486 jogs and dead ends which appear in its streets and might also have made their widths more nearly proportionate to their importance. (Harland Bartholomew:31.)

Leyner's Plat of Town Lots and Streets

Located on Des Moines' near West Side, Leyner's Plat provides one example, among many, of real estate speculation in the city during the Nineteenth Century and how its effects contributed to a lack of uniformity in city streets.

Officially recorded as "Leyner's Plat of Town Lots and Streets," this tract of land was laid out in 1856. It consisted of some eight acres. The proprietors of the plat, Peter A. Leyner, Mary E. Leyner, and John Leyner acquired this portion of land from the Pursley Estate Farms, an early tract of farmland on Des Moines' near West Side. The Military Road to Fort Dodge, which later became Cottage Grove Avenue, skirted Leyner's Plat. The convenience of this transportation route probably encouraged the Leyners in their scheme. In fact, however, this real estate venture did not succeed. Title transfer records, censuses, and city directories all suggest that the property remained largely--if not entirely--unimproved into the 1880s.

Leyner's Plat continued, nonetheless, to affect the future development of the neighborhood. Its street network and town lot configurations formed to a certain extent the basis for Kuhn's Addition, another speculative scheme platted in 1857.

A major influence over the development of Leyner's Plat occurred in 1859. At this time, the City of Des Moines established Woodland Cemetery as a public burial ground nearby. Several privately owned cemeteries followed suit, purchasing adjacent land. The presence of these institutions exerted a strong influence and appears to have depressed the real estate market for residential town lots in the vicinity.

C. TOWN BUILDING IN DES MOINES: LAND USE

Introduction

Although laissez faire practices resulted in unrestricted development, some traditional patterns of land use continued to obtain authority in Des Moines during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. These widely respected principles of town building imposed a certain uniformity on the city. For example, the American grid system of streets and lots was almost universally followed. Lots in almost all the plats were laid out in rectilinear configurations.

Other traditional patterns of residential land use also held force. Low-lying areas, initially shunned as inappropriate for habitation because of drainage, structural, and health problems, became more attractive for development as the choice high-lying locations close to the city were improved. (Still, these low-lying areas usually were never improved with the same quality of housing stock as at the preferred locations.)

New patterns of land use also developed in Des Moines during the period. Cemeteries, which had attracted wide public attention in the mid-Nineteenth Century as parklands, became subject to public debate later in the century, as officials spoke out against their threats to health. This debate, coupled with their gruesome purpose, fostered a predilection against residential development on the fringes of these institutions.

The growth of transportation played another important role in influencing land use. Three aspects are apparent. The rise of streetcars and public transportation opened vast new sections of the city for residential development. Grand boulevards and the traffic thoroughfares appealed to emerging Victorian social customs and economic capabilities because they showcased conspicuous consumption and usually enjoyed the convenience of the first-to-be-paved streets. Grand Avenue in Des Moines became a preferred residential corridor for these reasons, as well as East 9th Street and West 9th Street, to name a few others. In contrast, those streets which ran higgledy-piggledy from plat to plat lacked such appeal and did not attract the same quality of improvements. In the city's near westside,

20th Street and 21st Street between Woodland Avenue and Center Street provide good examples.

Cemeteries and Land Use

Four cemeteries are located adjacent to one another on Des Moines' near westside-- Woodland Cemetery, St. Ambrose Catholic Cemetery, Odd Fellows Cemetery, and Jewish (or Emanuel) Cemetery. Significant in terms of acreage and function, the presence of these cemeteries profoundly affected the evolution of land use in the surrounding sections of the city.

The Victorians looked upon death as an important aspect of reality. Consequently, they respected symbols, ceremonies, reminders, and tokens of mortality. Because cemeteries formed such large and imposing monuments to death, they assumed great significance in the Nineteenth Century. Not only did they serve the practical function as burial grounds, by mid-century they had become associated with parks and recreation. Indeed, in many American cities, Des Moines included, the public cemetery often provided the only large parkland space in the urban environment.

A few cemeteries in America achieved national attention and influenced the evolution of the landscape architecture of cemeteries across the country. Among them, Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, Mount Auburn Cemetery near Boston, and Graceland Cemetery in Chicago stand out in importance. All across the settled regions of the country, cemeteries served as parks, and city residents visited them for leisure and moral education--to stroll, enjoy the natural world, and perhaps pay respect to deceased family and friends.

Less is known at present about cemeteries and their significance in Des Moines, although references by name occur in local newspapers, citing Mount Auburn and Greenwood Cemeteries as models (*Iowa State Register*:1889a).

Woodland Cemetery, consisting of forty acres, was established as a public burial ground by the City of Des Moines and laid out in 1859. This cemetery embraced Odd Fellows' Cemetery, which had been established in 1858. St. Ambrose Catholic Cemetery, comprising twelve acres, was laid out in 1866. Consisting of two acres, Jewish (or Emanuel) Cemetery was established in 1871, although it was not laid out until 1880 (*Iowa State Register*:1880).

Originally located on the outskirts of the community, the combined presence of these large tracts of publicly and privately owned property overshadowed the development of the surrounding land. As this land was subdivided into plats and built up, and, as the number of burials mounted, this influence increased. At first, the cemeteries had been viewed as parklands, leisure grounds, and public amenities. By the end of the Nineteenth Century, they had become the subject of public agitation. Health professionals voiced concern about the contagion of disease. Investment interests supported a plan to disinter the burials and relocate them to new cemetery sites (possibly because they coveted the property for real estate development). Each of these issues contributed to the public debate.

Already in the 1880s, local newspapers discussed health concerns regarding cemeteries. The *Iowa State Register*, for example, published a long article on the topic, citing potential pollution of the city's water supply from the creek which drained Woodland Cemetery (*Iowa State Register*:1889c).

In the 1890s, diphtheria became a major concern for Des Moines. In May of 1889, only one death from this disease had been reported (*Iowa State Register*: 1889b). Between October 1, 1890, and October 1, 1891, in contrast, 100 deaths were attributed to the disease (*Iowa State Register*: 1891c). A contemporary newspaper account reported one method city residents employed to combat the spread of this disease:

A sad and touching sight was witnessed on Locust street, between First and Second streets, yesterday. A funeral procession crossed the bridge, coming from the east, and stopped when opposite the German Lutheran church. Just as the hearse halted, a band of forty children came out of the church and standing on the steps sang three verses of a familiar Sunday-school hymn. No explanation was needed, but passers-by could read the sad story at a glance. A child from the Sunday-school had been taken away by the dread diphtheria. No public service in the church could be held. But the former playmates and associates gathered on the church steps, to sing a hymn of sympathy and comfort, as the broken hearted mourners passed on their sad journey to the cemetery. (*Iowa State Register*:1889d.)

In addition to quarantine, health officials lobbied for other measures to combat the disease. The need and location for a new cemetery were widely debated (*Iowa State Register*:1891d) and the subject of water pollution from burial grounds discussed (*Ibid.*:1889e).

In the end, the city purchased new land to the northwest, established Glendale Cemetery there, and retained Woodland Cemetery. As a result, Woodland and its sister cemeteries continued to exert influence on the evolution of land use in the surrounding neighborhoods. Residential development skirted the cemeteries on all four sides, yet remained overshadowed by the character of the cemeteries' purpose. The cemeteries formed obstacles to cross-town transportation. Finally, the presence of these cemeteries tended to separate Des Moines' near West Side from that section of the city farther to the west.

Transportation

Transportation patterns have exerted profound affects on land use in Des Moines. Numerous dogleg and dead-end streets discouraged quality improvements in the neighborhoods adjacent to them. For another example, the presence of a thoroughfare for motorized vehicles encouraged redevelopment of residential properties along its fringes to ever higher uses.

By the early Twentieth Century, Des Moines streets had become a maze, yet an increasing number of cars and trucks spurred the need for cross-town roads to speed traffic . The historical implications of laissez faire development became particularly significant following World War I, when Des Moines sought to improve north-south traffic arteries through the construction of what was to become Harding Road.

Now named Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway (the street has been renamed several times, Warren Street, G Street, 21st Street, as well as Harding Road), this street and the city plats in this area illustrate irregular planning and its consequences for city streets. As Figure 6 shows, 21st Street lacked a standard width. This street also came to an end at Center Street. Through traffic was required to turn into Center Street before proceeding again north, a traffic pattern still true today. Construction of Harding Road reconfigured the plats

fronting 20th Street and 21st Streets between Woodland and Cottage Grove Avenues and these changes illustrate the effects of transportation on land use.

Prior to the 1930s, north-south traffic from Des Moines' northwest side relied on Cottage Grove Avenue and a series of north-south streets to access the downtown. Formerly known as the Military Road or the road to Fort Dodge, Cottage Grove historically provided a popular northwest artery in and out of the city, but the haphazard configuration of plats and traffic usage in Des Moines manifested no particular street to serve as its north-south link to the downtown. Keosauqua Way was one attempt to solve this problem. Another attempt, sponsored by the Des Moines Realtors Bureau in 1919, proposed a new traffic way from Grand Avenue to Cottage Grove.

The proposition involves the widening of a part of Twenty-first street, a new way being cut through from Twenty-first to Twentieth street, and the widening of the last street until it reached Cottage Grove avenue. Most of the proposed way is now paved, but probably two-thirds of it is brick in bad condition; and part is not wide enough for a standard street. (*Des Moines Register*:1919a.)

A plan of this proposed route was published at the same time (see Figure 6). Although faced with difficult constraints of property ownership and street configurations, city planners opted to adopt this plan. It involved a bend in Harding Road at its intersection with Center Street, effectively joining 20th Street and 21st Street into this new north-south route. After long discussion, planning, and federal commitment, this new traffic way was built in 1935 (*Journal of City Council*:1199).

The construction of Harding Road provided Des Moines with a new and needed cross-town traffic way. Its success can be measured by increased traffic on this road over the years and recent plans to expand the route, now known as Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, into a bypass to skirt downtown Des Moines and connect with the Des Moines Freeway. While this progress benefited the entire community, it depressed the adjacent residential neighborhood. The traffic way injected a barrier between dwellings east and west of it in Kuhn's Addition and Leyner's Plat. The dwellings on the west side suffered the most because they were isolated between the traffic way and cemeteries. In this sense, Harding Road further compounded the irregularity of this irregular section of Des Moines. Finally, the route introduced new levels of noise and vehicle emissions into these and other adjacent plats, such as Brown's 4th Addition.

D. ARCHITECTURE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN VICTORIAN DES MOINES

Introduction

This and a series of associated Historic American Building Survey recordations (HABS Nos. IA-190, IA-191, IA-193, IA-194, and IA-195) provide opportunities to analyze and evaluate, in intensive fashion, several examples of affordable housing constructed in Des Moines during the 1890s and the first decade of the Twentieth Century. These recordations serve to supplement the findings of a previous architectural survey, which identified certain design subtypes within the Queen Anne architectural resources of the city. Finally, these recordations provide an opportunity to study the Victorian "house to rent," a little-studied subject to date.

Although the large homes of the Victorian period have captured popular imagination in America during the last decade, the late Nineteenth Century also saw the construction of numerous cottages for the middle, lower-middle, and lower classes. Because these modest dwellings lack the size, architectural detailing, and complexity of larger dwellings, they have received less scholarly attention. They are also difficult to evaluate because archival information about them is limited. Nonetheless, affordable housing emerged during the late Nineteenth Century as an important property type in Des Moines and attracted the attention not only of the potential homeowners, but also real estate investors. The cottage provided an ideal property type for both purposes.

The preparation of this historical context was aided by a study prepared by William C. Page and Joanne R. Walroth, "Towards a Greater Des Moines: Early Suburbanization and Development, circa 1880-circa 1920," a reconnaissance survey of certain suburban neighborhoods in Des Moines during the late Victorian period. This 1992 study identified style and function as two important architectural influences prevalent in the city during that period. In terms of style, Queen Anne and Colonial Revival tastes held sway over local design. In addition to these stylistic changes, residential design also evolved according to its function. For example, Page and Walroth identified the double house as a new property type because it responded to the need for rental property.

This present HABS recordation expands the reference points of the 1992 study by identifying affordable housing as another architectural influence over the evolution of residential design during the period. As home ownership came within reach of an increasing number of residents, the demand for affordable housing stimulated new architectural designs. The cottage provided one good solution and was adapted to both owner-occupied and rental purposes.

El-Shaped Cottage

Constructed in 1890, this cottage at 828 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway exhibits several aspects of vernacular Queen Anne styling. This section of the report analyzes these architectural influences and places the house in historical context. It also expands the subtypes of Queen Anne resources in Des Moines as identified in "Towards a Greater Des Moines."

That 1992 study identified the following five categories of Queen Anne design:

- Standard Queen Anne House
- Queen Anne Canted Bay House
- Queen Anne House
- Queen Anne Cottage
- Queen Anne Gable-on-Hip House

The cottage at 828 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway illustrates another category of these resources, the El-Shaped Cottage influenced by Queen Anne design. Modest in terms of scale and architectural complexity, yet containing at least 1.5 stories, these cottages employ the traditional format of el-shaped house and add Queen Anne-influenced details for decoration. The cottage at 860 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway (HABS No. IA-190) is another example of this subtype.

The roof design consists of a front-gable with an intersecting cross gable over the south and north projections, each roof of moderately steep pitch. A shed roof covers the one-story wing at the rear of the building. The moderately steep pitch of the gables provides one note of picturesqueness to this cottage and calls attention to an influence of Queen Anne styling. The cottage also strives to achieve asymmetry, which can be seen in the slightly projecting portion of the north elevation. (The cottage at 860 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway lacks this feature.)

Inclusion of the large window on the facade with its classical-inspired, leaded glass panes, points toward the influence of Queen Anne styling. It is unfortunate that the trimwork of the front porch is missing.

The construction date of this cottage, 1890, was provided by records in the Des Moines City Assessor's Office. This date corresponds with the property's transfer of title to David L. Jewett, which was recorded in the public record on May 29, 1890.

The Affordable Cottage

The cottage evolved during the late Nineteenth Century in Des Moines as a new type of residential dwelling. Formerly the word "cottage" had euphemistically described a wide range of suburban dwellings. In 1887, for example, Palliser, Palliser, and Company, architects of New York City, published a pattern book illustrating dozens of "cottage" designs, which, in fact, were intended for the substantial, upper-middle class pocketbook.

These semantics notwithstanding, the economic prosperity of the 1880s and 1890s stimulated construction of many new "cottages" in Des Moines. As the *Iowa State Register* reported:

The homes now being built are of the most modern and ornate style of architecture and are much more roomy and extensive than formerly. Both the mansion and small, unpretentious cottage of to-day are not considered complete without the furnace, and hardwood finish, once luxuries only accessible to the rich. (*Iowa State Register*:1889a.)

In this regard, it appears that life styles of affluent and modest householders in Des Moines narrowed during the late Nineteenth Century as more and more homes featured modern conveniences and amenities.

The "small, unpretentious" cottage at 828 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway calls attention to one example of such an affordable house. With two floors of living space, this building could be considered "roomy and extensive." The inclusion of the dormer window on the north elevation provides another source of interior space. The large window on the facade, with its decorative upper panel, the two front entryways each surmounted with transom windows added other amenities, which could have been considered "once luxuries accessible only to the rich." Finally, the half basement of this cottage might have housed a furnace to provide central heat.

The "House to Rent"

As the result of complex factors, the "house to rent" (an historic phrase to described a detached, single-family rental dwelling) emerged as a new property type within the architectural resources of Des Moines during the late Nineteenth Century. Other types of rental housing--hotels, boarding houses, double houses (or duplexes), and tenement houses--are thought to have had played an important role in sheltering the city's early inhabitants, but few of these buildings remain extant today (Page and Walroth:E-62/E-63). In each of these facilities, all residents shared a common roof.

Between 1880 and 1890, the population of Des Moines more than doubled (Ibid.:E-2). This huge increase constituted a boom of hitherto unseen proportions in the city and resulted in housing needs and shortages. Houses to rent were in short supply. One contemporary reported:

"In all my experience in this city," said Mr. Thos. Hatton, the real estate dealer, "I never knew such a scarcity of good houses to rent. There is always at this time of year a good demand for houses, but now there is a demand for a better class and a demand which cannot be met. Many houses have been built the past year and are occupied and yet the people keep coming and want more. It is an excellent indication of what the year may bring to us." (*Iowa State Register*:1890a.)

In addition to this shortage, the establishment and expansion of public transportation in Des Moines provided workers with convenient and rapid transportation to jobs. No longer restricted to live within walking distance of employment, workers could live in the suburbs away from the core city. Finally, Des Moines experienced a period of economic growth during the 1880s and early 1890s, which heightened life style expectations among its residents, increased their leisure time to enjoy parks and public amusements, and fostered construction of new homes with modern amenities for the middle and lower-middle classes, as well as for the affluent.

In 1890, the *Iowa State Register* neatly summarized these and other issues as they related to rental housing. In an article titled "Real Estate Talk...The Strongest Demand for Homes Ever Known in Des Moines," the newspaper noted that:

The house renting season is here and never before has there been such a scarcity of houses to rent. The demand has far exceeded the supply. It has been almost impossible to get good houses to rent. The old shells down town, which are hardly fit to live in, are for rent and always will be. The long rows of cheap bricks are also to rent and many will never again be occupied. People will not put up with cheap crowded houses or old dilapidated buildings when rapid transit has made it possible to enjoy cheap suburban cottages. The universal call now among renters is for cottages with large yards and plenty of room, no matter how far out situated. The desire to live "close to business" has almost gone. (*Iowa State Register*:1890b.)

This article clearly points out changes in the rental market. This new market demanded a detached, single-family dwelling situated on a private city lot and removed from the crowded conditions of the inner city, preferably near a streetcar line.

As a result, the architectural design of the house to rent in Des Moines changed. As with each of the previously popular types of rental housing, the detached rental house presented unique exterior and interior design problems. Because land costs constituted an appreciable portion of the landlord's overall investment, small-sized lots were preferred. The cottage at 828 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway provides one example. Situated on a lot measuring 50' x 130', the relatively small size lot imposed restrictions on the cottage's architectural design. While the building could extend far to the rear, the lot's narrow width limited the facade. It is also presumed that, because the lot is situated next to Woodland Cemetery and in a location less preferred because of associations with disease and death, that the selling price of this lot was cheaper than lots in more desirable locations.

Although this cottage may have been heated by a central furnace (as the *Iowa State Register* article had noted were *de rigueur* even for the owner-occupied "small, unpretentious cottage of today"), this is not certain. Nonetheless, it remains evident that this cottage contains more than modest architectural ornamentation. Its woodwork, for example, features mopboard around the floors, molded window and door trim with bull's-eye corner blocks, and a large facade window with its leaded glass upper pane. The building also features two doors on the facade, each featuring transoms. In short, the cottage compares favorably with owner-occupied cottages of the period and corroborates the contention that "people will not put up with cheap crowded houses," as the newspaper reporter commented about rental properties above.

The role of David L. Jewett in this context deserves further study. As the son of George A. Jewett, lumber merchant of Des Moines, David calls attention to a second generation capitalist in Des Moines. He entered his father's business and expanded it. As the cottage at 828 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway illustrates, David was also involved in rental properties.

IV

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

No original architectural drawings, plans, or elevations were found for this building.

B. HISTORIC IMAGES

No historic images of this property were discovered.

C. INTERVIEWS

Gerald A. Jewett with William C. Page, July 18, 1994. Jewett shared information about his family and the development of the Jewett Lumber Company. He also provided access to the company's file of corporation history.

John P. Zeller with William C. Page, at numerous times in 1994. Zeller shared his extensive knowledge about the history and development of Des Moines and answered specific questions about it.

D. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. *Primary and Unpublished Sources*

Peoples Abstract Company
No date. Abstract of Title.

Bartholomew, Harland
No date. "A preliminary Major Street Plan for Des Moines, Iowa." Prepared for Des Moines Zoning Commission, circa 1925.

Des Moines City Directories
1861, 1866, 1869, 1871-72, 1873-74, 1892, 1900, 1908.

Journal of [Des Moines] City Council
1935 "Resolution No. 2655." October 10.

Plat Book A
Polk County Recorder's Office.

Plat Book C
Polk County Recorder's Office.

Plat Book D
Polk County Recorder's Office.

Title Transfer Book C-3.
Polk County Recorder's Office.

U. S. Census
1900

Dixon, J. M., editor
1876 Centennial History of Polk County, Iowa. Des Moines.

2. *Secondary and Published Sources*

Baker, John Milnes
1994 American House Styles: A Concise Guide. W. W. Norton
& Company, New York.

Gowans, Alan
1992 Styles and Types of North American Architecture. Icon
Editions, New York.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee
1984 A Field Guide to American Houses. Alfred A. Knopf, New
York.

Page, William C., and Joanne R. Walroth
1992 "Towards a Greater Des Moines: Early Suburbanization and
Development, circa 1880 - circa 1920." Des Moines Plan
and Zoning Department, River Bend Neighborhood
Association, and State Historical Society of Iowa, Des
Moines.

Phillips, Steven J.
1992 Old House Dictionary. The Preservation Press,
Washington, DC.

U. S. Department of the Interior
No date Manual for Editing HABS/HAER Documentation.
National Park Service.

3. *Newspapers*

Iowa State Register

1878a "Dr. Turner proposes to lay his street car track to Nineteenth street..." June 28.

Iowa State Register

1878b "University Place Items." June 18.

Iowa State Register

1880 "Our bretheren [sic] of the Jewish faith..." July 7.

Iowa State Register

1881 "The New Cemetery." August 23.

Iowa State Register

1888 "The Year 1888."

Iowa State Register

1889a "Building Up Des Moines." September 22.

Iowa State Register

1889b "Dr. Matthews has prepared this summary" [mortality rates].
June 15.

Iowa State Register

1889c "Cemetery Danger." November 24.

Iowa State Register

1889d "A Sad and touching sight..." [diphtheria]. November 28.

Iowa State Register

1889e "Water Pollution." December 8.

Iowa State Register

1890a "Des Moines in 1890." January 26.

Iowa State Register

1890b "Real Estate Talk." April 12.

Iowa State Register

1891a "The Death of T. E. Brown." May 7.

Iowa State Register

1891b "The Funeral of T. E. Brown." May 10.

Iowa State Register

1891c "Des Moines' Death Rate." October 17.

Iowa State Register

1891d "The Cemetery Question." November 7.

Iowa State Register

1895a "Death of Mr. Jacob Kuhn." July 2.

Iowa State Register

1895b "Funeral of Joseph [sic] Kuhn." July 5.

Iowa State Register

1902 "D. R. Ewing Dead." January 26.

Des Moines Tribune

1913 "Death of a Pioneer/George P. Leyner." May 21.

Des Moines Register and Leader

1913 "Pioneer Des Moines Business Man Dead." May 21.

Des Moines Register

1919a "New Traffic Highway proposed." October 20.

Des Moines Register

1919b "Realtors propose New Traffic Way North From Grand."
October 20.

Des Moines Register

1935 "Shovels, Tractors, Mixers Grind on Street Project."
October 12.

4. *Maps*

Huebinger, M.

1909 *Map of the City of Des Moines, Iowa.*

Sanborn Map Company

1901 *Map of Des Moines, Iowa.* New York.

Sanborn Map Company

1920 *Map of Des Moines, Iowa.* New York.

Sanborn Map Comany

1920-1943

Map of Des Moines, Iowa. New York.

E. LIKELY SOURCES NOT YET INVESTIGATED

As further scholarly work investigates the "house to rent," this information can be used to reevaluate this aspect of affordable housing in Des Moines.

F. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

The following supplemental material is added here to outline the methodology used in this report. Because of the scarcity of good historical accounts of Des Moines, particularly its

architectural development, the use of primary materials was mandated. In an effort to conduct a systematic, yet realistic, search within the time constraints imposed by the contract deadline, a few variables were defined. The search then focused on finding the following facts:

- Year of the resource's construction.
- Name of the first owner.
- First owner's occupation.
- Determination whether the property was owner occupied and/or a rental.

Primary research was conducted using newspapers, federal census records, Des Moines city directories, and Sanborn fire insurance maps. Each of these sources has its own limitations. The search was further complicated because the address of the resource has changed several times due to city renumbering and renaming of the street.

Although numerous newspapers were consulted, no direct citation was found to document the year of construction of the resource. The modest size of this house, the low level of its architectural detailing, and the quantity of similar houses being constructed in Des Moines during the late Victorian period made it unlikely that this house was the subject of newspaper attention.

The Federal census of 1880 was consulted for data concerning Ward 4 in Des Moines. This census listed individuals by name. The researcher noted every address whose location was near the study area. None of these addresses related to the resource under study.

The results of this research were then checked against the Des Moines City Directory of 1882. This directory lists individual's dwellings in an various ways, often mentioning only an area of the city. From this sketchy data, the researcher determined that none of the 1880 census names appeared in Kuhn's Addition or Leyner's Plat, although this determination is imprecise. Analysis of this research concluded, therefore, that no residents were living in either Kuhn's Plat or Leyner's Addition in the summer of 1880.

The Federal census of 1900 was then consulted. This enumeration has addresses for individuals, and it also shows whether the occupant of the property is an owner or renter.

The Des Moines City Directory of 1908 was then consulted. This is the first city directory that contains a street-by-street index with addresses the same as the homes retain today.

The earliest Sanborn fire insurance map for the neighborhood shows the neighborhood in 1901. Two other Sanborns mapped the area, one in 1920 and one in 1943. All of the resources under study in this series of HABS recordations appeared on the earliest Sanborn map. The single exception was the cottage at 810 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, which appeared for the first time on the 1920 map.

G. PROJECT STATEMENT

This documentation stems from the proposed construction of the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway loop bypass in Des Moines, Iowa. This project requires demolition of the building documented in this recordation.

This documentation was prepared for the Des Moines Community Development Department in partial fulfillment of a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the City of Des Moines, the Iowa State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Federal Highway Administration.

Specifications for this recordation were outlined by Gregory D. Kendrick, Chief, History Branch, Division of National Preservation Programs, Rocky Mountain Regional Office of the United States Department of the Interior in a letter of May 1993.

William C. Page, Public Historian of Des Moines, acted as principal investigator for the project and prepared the written narrative. He was assisted by John P. Zeller, researcher, and Joanne R. Walroth, editor. Ralph J. Christian, Architectural Historian of the State Historical Society of Iowa, consulted the principal investigator in developing historical context for this recordation.

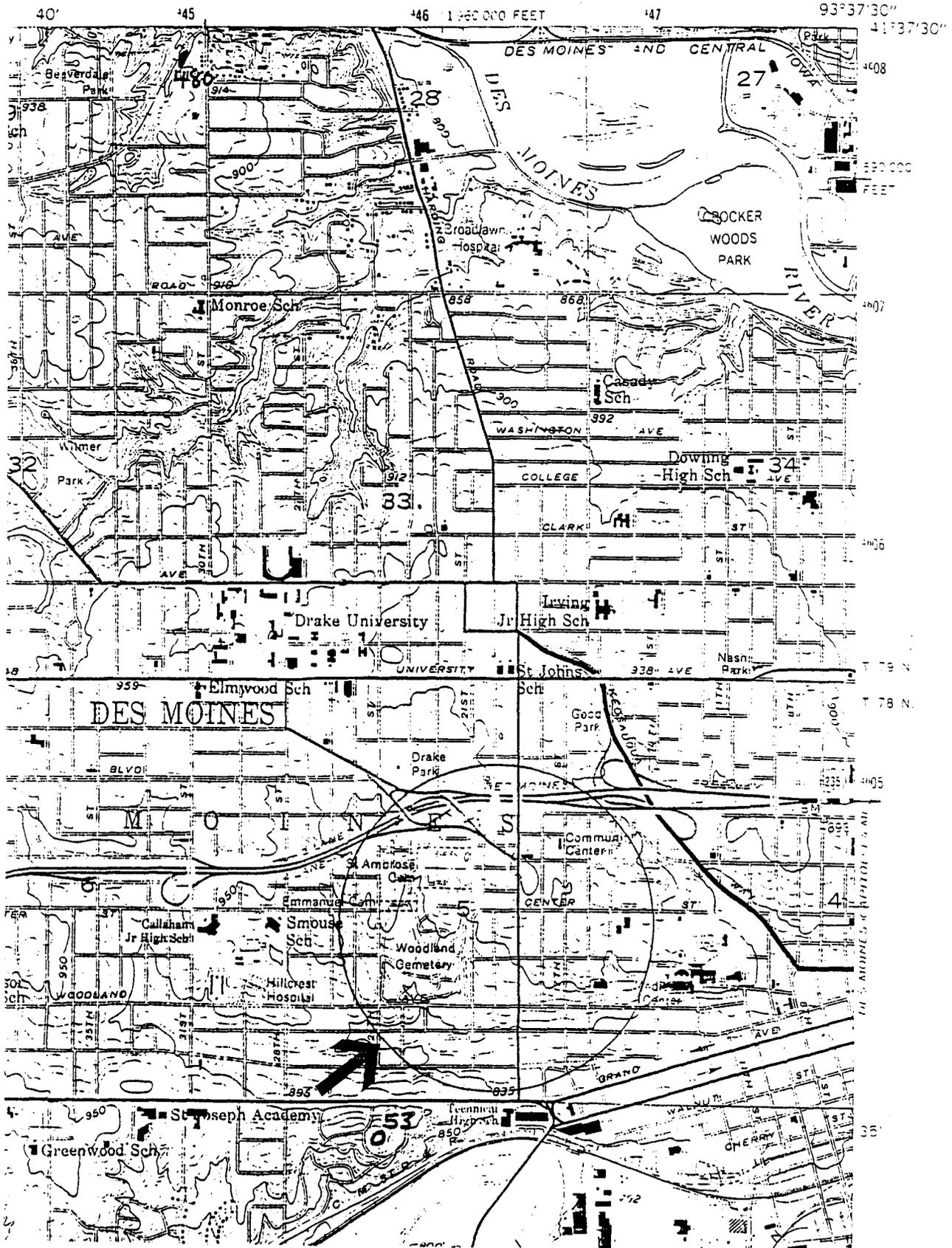
Steven Alexander, Alexander's Photography of Des Moines, served as photographer. He shot all photos for this project and supervised development and printing of the photographic products.

Mary Neiderbach, Associate Planner of the Des Moines Community Development Department, served as coordinator.

Christine Whitacre, Historian, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, United States Department of the Interior, served as project reviewer.

All work for this recordation was accomplished in July, August, and September 1994.

AREA MAP DES MOINES, IOWA



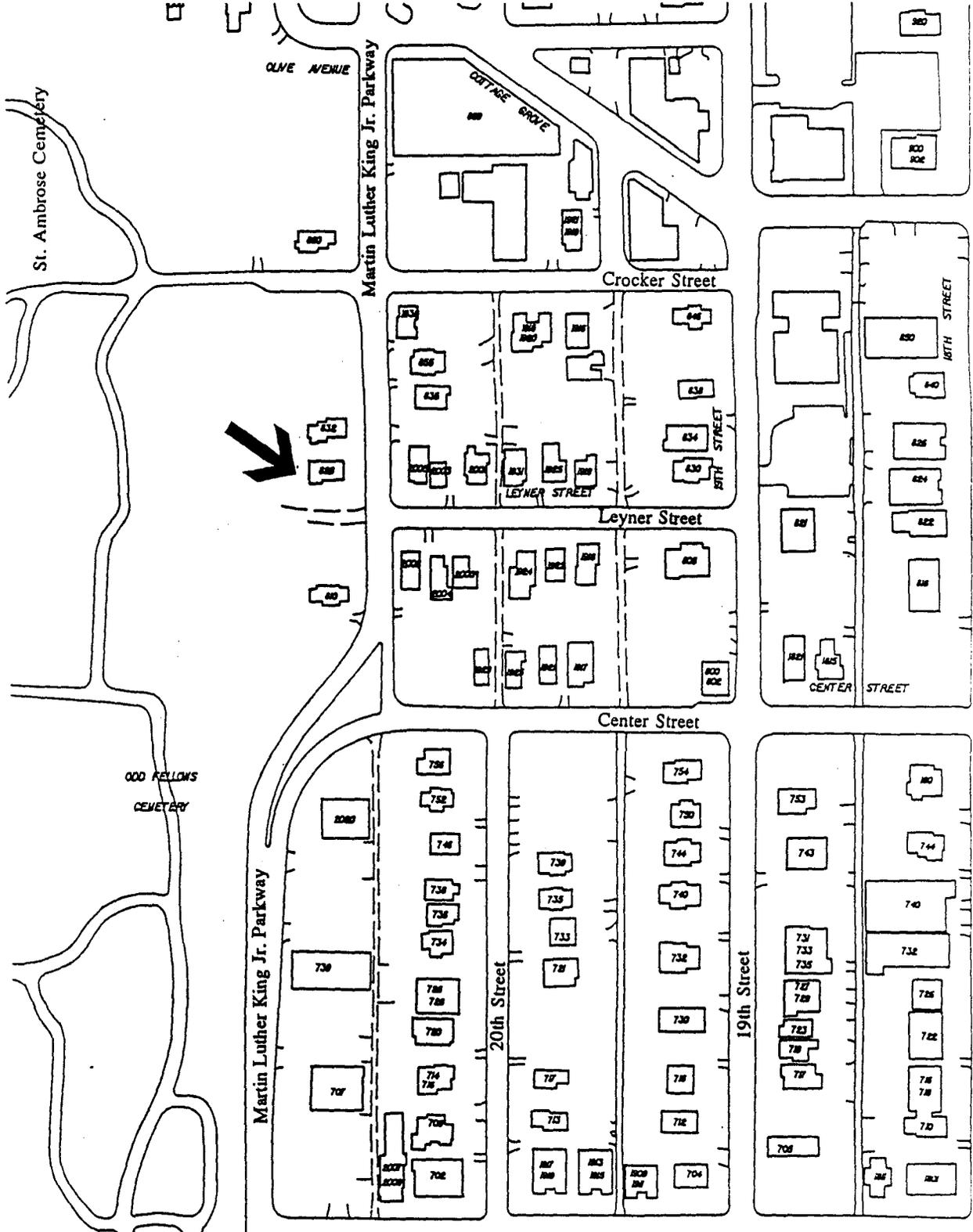
Source: U. S. G. S. Des Moines SW Quadrangle, Iowa.

Figure 1



SITE MAP

Scale: 1" = 200'. 828 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PARKWAY



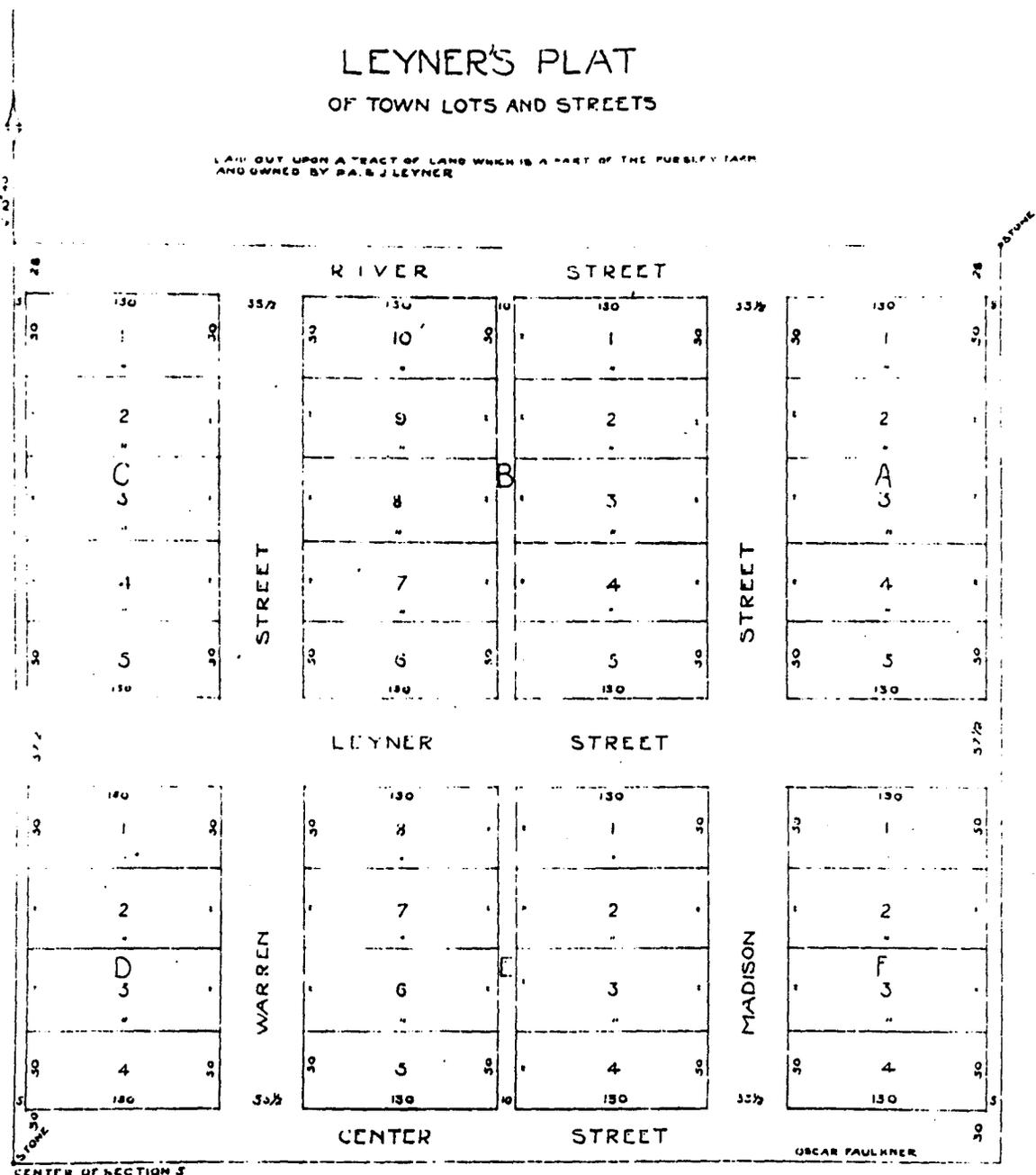
Source: City of Des Moines Engineering Department.

Figure 2



PLAT

LEYNER'S PLAT OF TOWN LOTS AND STREETS



FOR DECLARATION OF PROPRIETORS CORRECTING THE ABOVE PLAT [FOR ITS LOCATION]
SEE CITY RECORD "H" PAGES 384 AND 385

RECORDED DECEMBER 14 1864

L. B. TIFFIN RECORDER
POLK CO. IOWA.

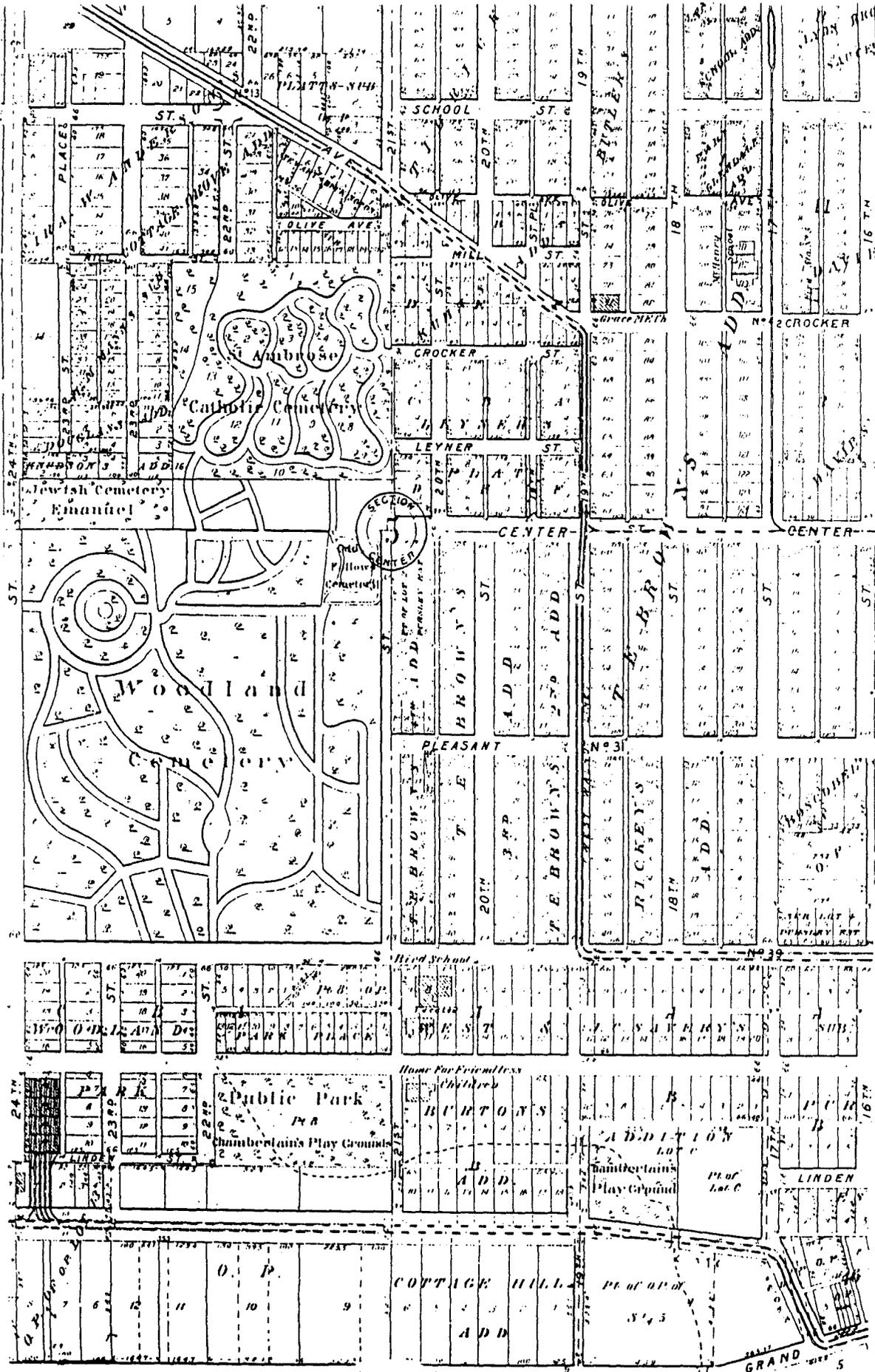
Source: Polk County Recorder's Office, Plat Book A, p. 21.



Figure 3

NEIGHBORHOOD MAP CIRCA 1909

COTTAGE
HABS No. IA-192
Page 27



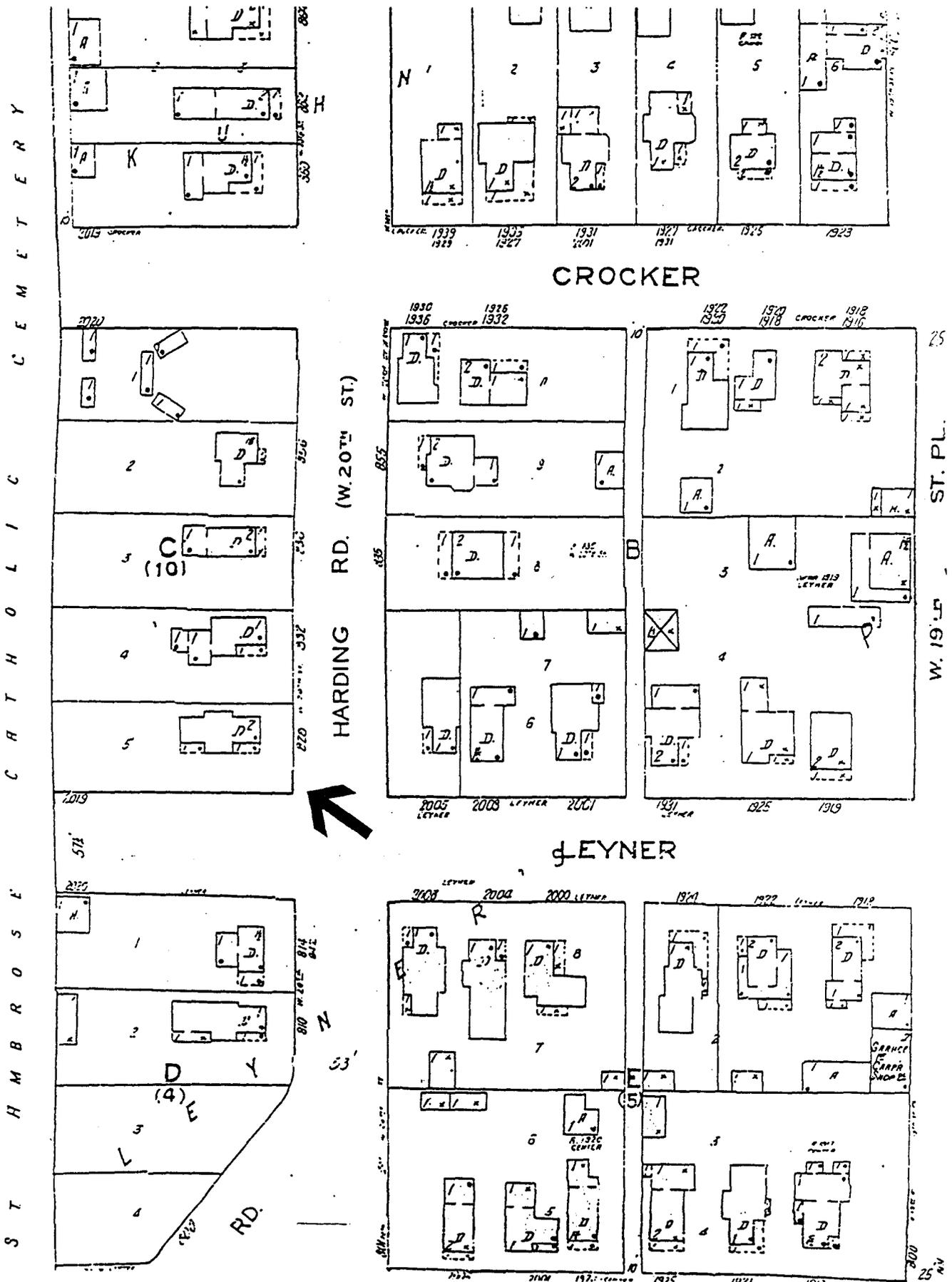
PAGE 57

Source: Huebinger, Map of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, 1909.

Figure 4



**NEIGHBORHOOD MAP
CIRCA 1920-1943
828 INDICATED BY ARROW**

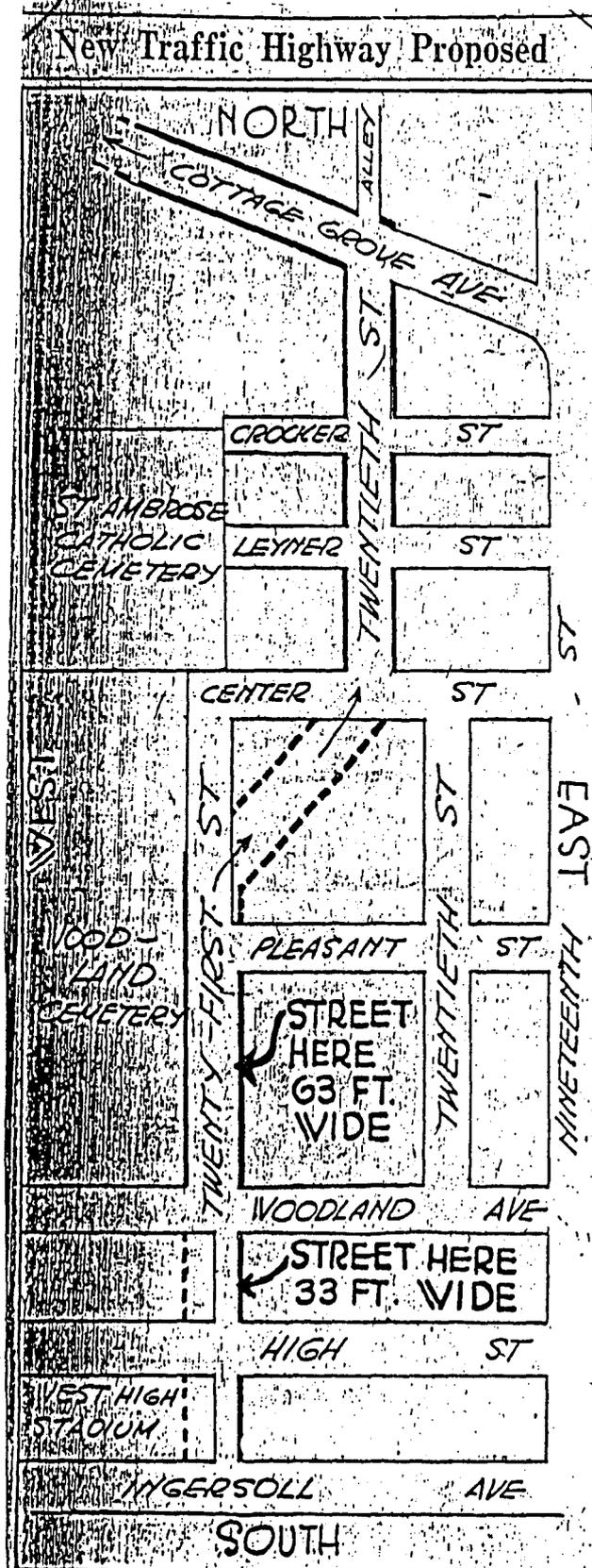


Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1920-1943.

Figure 5



PLAN FOR HARDING ROAD 1919



Source: *Des Moines Register*, October 20, 1919.



Figure 6