

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

HABS No. IA-193

HABS

IOWA

77-DESMO,

25-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
810 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway

HABS
IOWA
77-DESMO,
85-

COTTAGE

HABS No. IA-193

Historic Name: COTTAGE

Location: 810 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway
Des Moines, IA

Leyner's Plat of Town Lots and Streets
Lot 2
Block D

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 between 1901 and 1908 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. The employment of an asymmetrical ground plan, somewhat complex roof configuration, and bay window on the south elevation point to these influences, while the basic el-shape of this building hearkens to older building traditions. Modest in size and architectural detailing, this building 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 by this time in the city, and the mopboards and window and door surrounds in the interior of this cottage call attention to one amenity not found in comparable housing of the preceding 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.

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

I

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. PHYSICAL HISTORY:

1. Date(s) of Erection

Between 1901 and 1908.

2. Architect

Unknown.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners

[This property has also been known historically as 810 21st Street and 810 Harding Road.]

James C. Dixon, "colored" laborer (1908 city directory).

4. Builders, Contractors, Suppliers

Unknown.

5. Original Plans and Construction Drawings

Unknown.

6. Alterations and Additions

Enclosure of front porch.

Rear porch addition.

Installation of cover-up siding.

B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

The historical context for this resource is discussed in Chapter III of this report, beginning on page 7.

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 first decade of the Twentieth Century.

2. Condition of Fabric

Dilapidated (to be demolished).

3. Summary Description

This is a frame, single-family dwelling. The resource consists of a 1-story main house, whose footprint measures approximately 16' x 50'.

B. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR

1. Foundation

Brick foundation.
Footing materials unknown.

2. Wall Construction

Asphalt roll siding with brick design finish.

3. Structural Systems

Balloon wood frame construction.

4. Porches, Stoops, Etc.

Enclosed front porch.
Enclosed rear porch.

5. Openings, Doorways, and Windows

Front doorway on south elevation.
No front door.
Back doorway on south elevation.
Wooden back door with glass pane over 2-panels .

1/1 double-hung sash windows.
Paired windows in bay, otherwise single windows.
Pedimented wood window hoods over windows in bay.
Louvered opening in gable end of south elevation.

No shutters.

6. Roof

Cross-gable roof over main house. East and west gables intersect main gable slightly below its ridge.

Shed roof over enclosed front porch and enclosed rear porch.

Exposed rafters under shed roofs.

Hip roof with slight slope over bay window.

All roofs covered with asphalt roll.

Medium width eaves surrounding main house and porches.

No cornice.

No dormers, cupolas, or towers.

7. Chimneys

One interior brick chimney located about 15 feet from west elevation on north slope of main gable.

C. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR

1. Floor Plans

5 rooms on Floor 1 (parlor, living room, two bedrooms, kitchen. Also pantry off living room.)
Full basement.

2. Stairways

Stairwell to basement filled with refuse.

3. Flooring

Softwood floorboards on Floor 1 (appear to be pine).
Floor 1 extensively covered with refuse.
Earth floor in one-half of basement.
Concrete floor in one-half of basement.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finishes

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

5. Doorways, Doors, and Windows

Front doorframe trimmed with decorative molding.
Other doorframes plain.
Transom over front doorframe.
No doors.

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.

8. Mechanical and Electrical Equipment

Warm air, base heating.

9. Lighting Fixtures

Removed.

10. Plumbing

Standard modern.

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.
Brick sidewalk.
Paved street with curb and gutters.

2. Historic Landscape Design

Brick sidewalk, laid in herringbone pattern (deteriorated and partially overlaid with asphalt), between street and front yard.
Poured concrete retaining wall, steps, and pedestrian walk from sidewalk to front porch.

Stand of mature Mulberry trees along south property line.
Stand of 5 semi-mature Ash trees along sidewalk.
Paved curb cut near southeast corner of property.
Low concrete rubble retaining wall adjacent to sidewalk, wrapping around on south elevation to form small dooryard.
Poured concrete steps to front porch.
Backyard enjungled with sundry trees and ground vegetation.

3. Outbuildings

None.

III

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built between 1901 and 1908, the cottage at 810 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. The Queen Anne Cottage is one example of this new property type in Des Moines.

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 Farms Estate, 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 obtained. 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-191, IA-192, 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.

Queen Anne Cottage

Constructed between 1901 and 1908, this cottage at 810 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway exhibits several aspects of vernacular Queen Anne styling. The ground plan and the roof design are most notable in this regard. This section of the report analyzes these architectural influences and places the house in historical context among other dwellings built in the city during the same period.

"Towards a Greater Des Moines" 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

These categories differentiated architectural designs according to their size (1-story, 1.5-stories, and 2- or 2.5 stories) and according to their roof configurations. Generally speaking, the smaller the house in terms of size, the more restrained its architectural detailing.

The report concluded that the

Queen Anne cottage constitutes an important, small-scale subtype, notable for its charming demeanor. These T-shaped buildings contain

1-story, or 1.5-stories, with the long axis forming the facade and covered with a gable end roof. This subtype appears in North Des Moines and Capital Park in particular. Although this type is usually wood frame in construction, a few brick examples exist" (Page and Walroth:I, E-59.)

The floor plan of the cottage at 810 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway relates to this Queen Anne cottage subtype. The floor plan features a parlor at the front of the house. Although the front entry porch has been enclosed, the presence of a porch within an ell of the floor plan is another feature of the Queen Anne cottage. This porch provides two entryways to the cottage, one to the parlor and one to the living room, which adjoins this formal room. Two bedrooms adjoin the living room, with the kitchen at the rear.

The roof of this cottage, which features a design of moderate complexity, seeks to project a feeling of picturesqueness. It consists of a full cross-gable roof of moderate pitch. The front-gable roof runs front-to-back over the main block of the house. This roof is intersected by two side-gable roofs, which form the cross-gable configuration. While these intersecting roofs contribute to a picturesque feeling, it should be noted that this house possesses only a cross-gable design and lacks the architectural picturesqueness of the more complex Queen Anne Cottage in Des Moines. Such resources feature more complex roof designs. The cottage at 1604 West 8th Street in North Des Moines, for example, possesses a gable-on-hip configuration overlaid upon the cross gable design. The cottage at 1393 Pennsylvania Avenue provides a similar example in Capital Park.

By the same token, this house does possess a more complex floor plan and roof configuration than the nearby house at 832 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway (HABS No. IA-191), so it should not be construed that this house was the most economical of its type. Construction of the bay window, which benefits from a southern exposure, provides another amenity to this cottage and underlies this point.

It should also be noted that this discussion has addressed only the roof of the original building. The wing and its shed roof on the northwest, for example, is a later addition and plays no role in the architectural concept of the building.

The construction date of this cottage, between 1901 and 1908, was determined by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of 1901, which shows the lot vacant, and the Des Moines city directory of 1908, which lists the property as occupied. Records in the Des Moines City Assessor's Office, which list its construction in 1890, appear to be incorrect.

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 reported in 1889:

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 810 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway calls attention to one example of such an affordable house. Although modest in terms of size and architectural detailing, its original woodwork remains extant and features a level of decoration higher than simple utility. Featuring a full basement, this cottage might have originally possessed a furnace providing central heat. The presence of an interior brick chimney and the apparent lack of flues on the first floor suggest this might have been so.

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.

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1881 "The New Cemetery." August 23.

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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.

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1889e "Water Pollution." December 8.

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

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

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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.

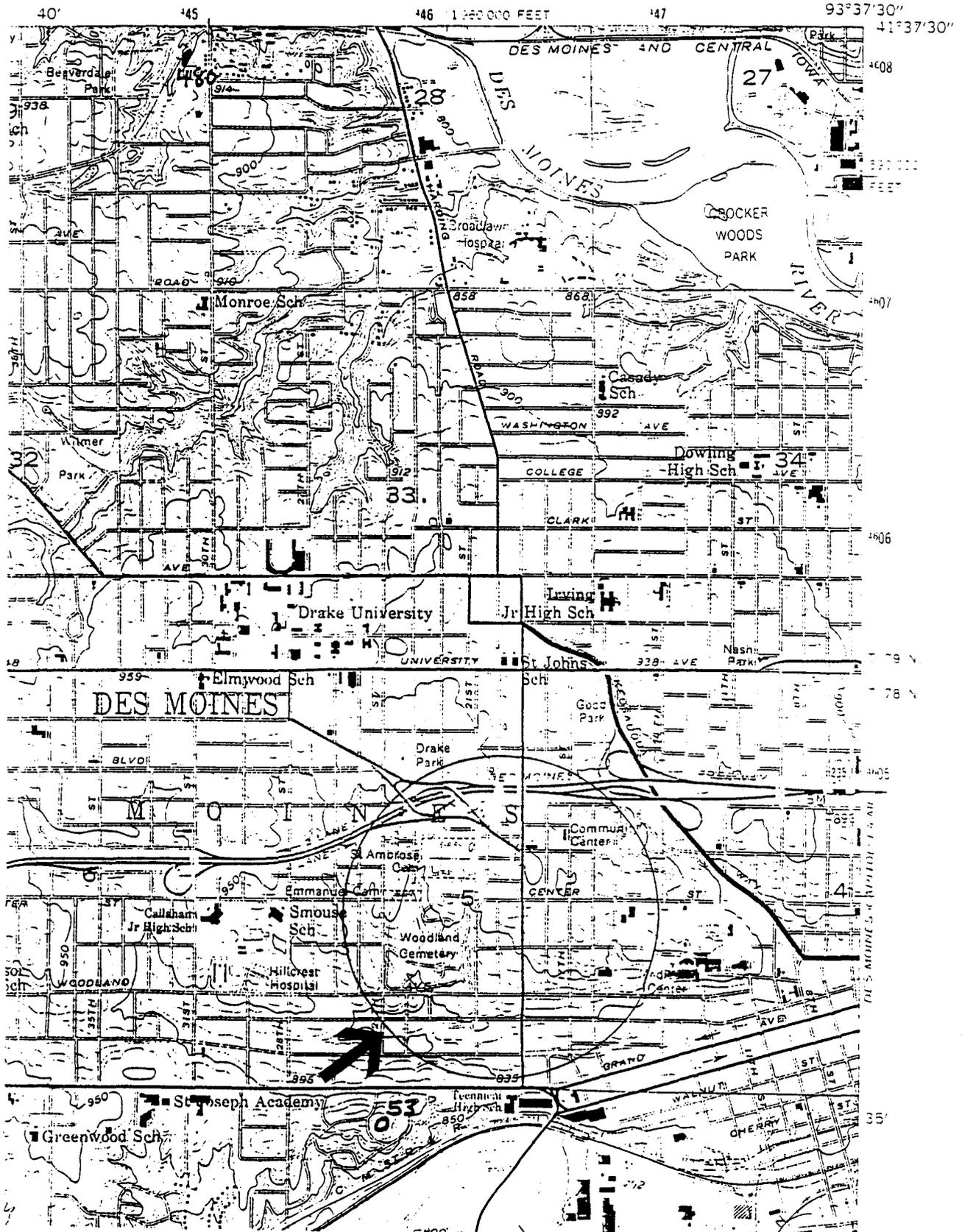
Steven Alexander, Alexander's Photography of Des Moines, served as photographer. He shot all photos for this project and supervised development and printing of the photographic products.

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.

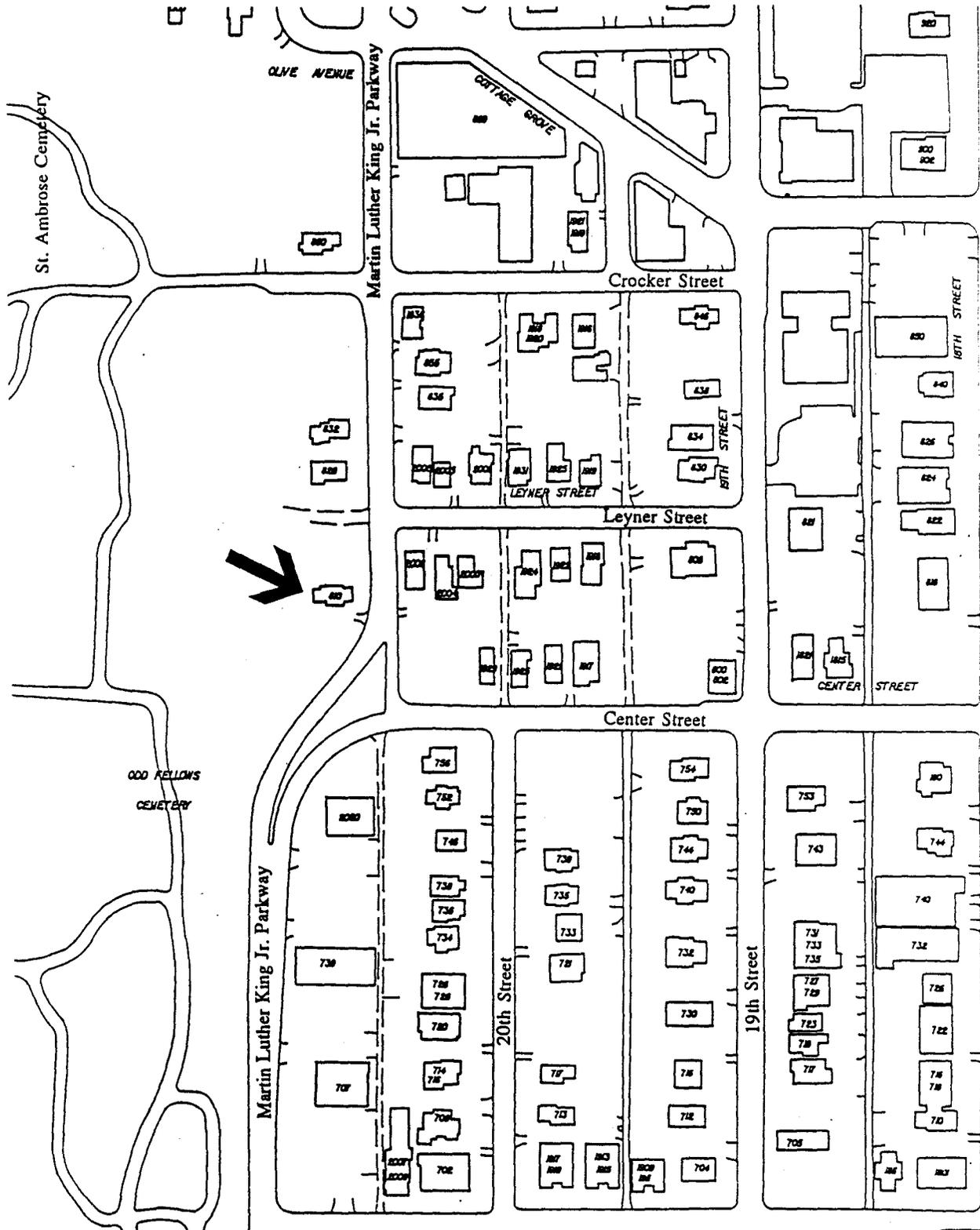
Figure 1



SITE MAP

810 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PARKWAY

Scale: 1" = 200'



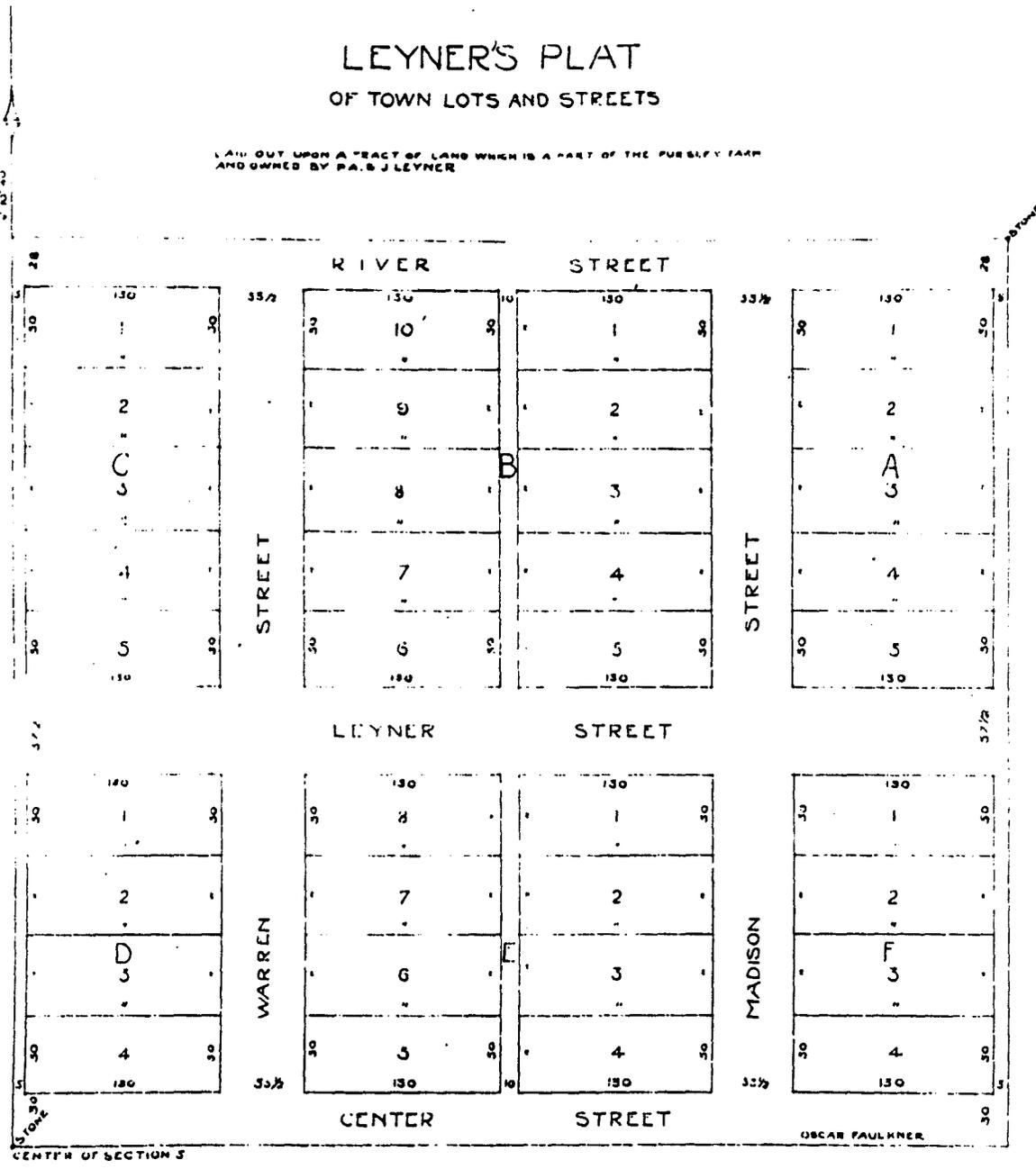
Source: City of Des Moines Engineering Department.



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 12 1894

L. B. TIFFIN RECORDER
POLK CO. IOWA.

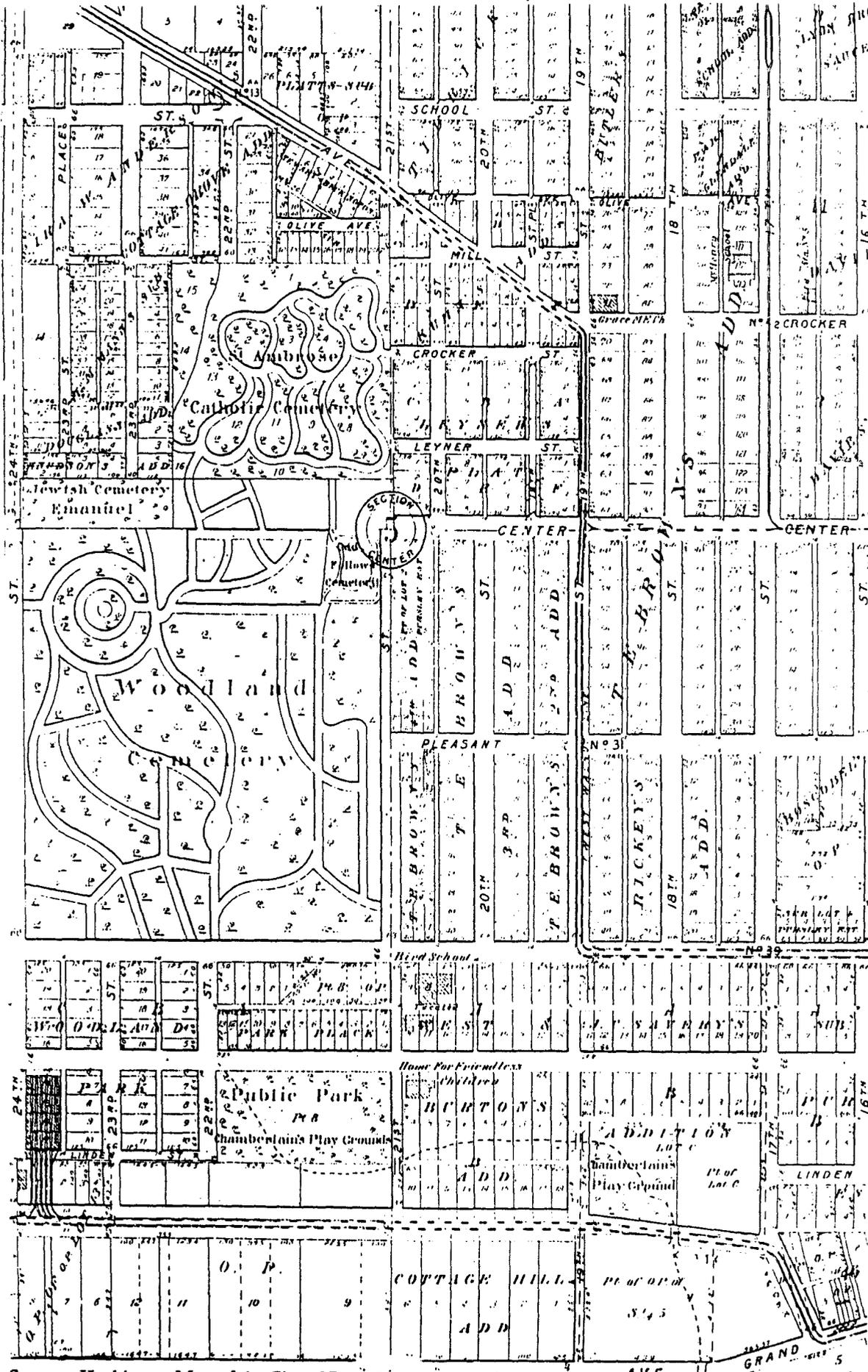
Source: Polk County Recorder's Office, Plat Book A, p. 21.



Figure 3

NEIGHBORHOOD MAP CIRCA 1909

COTTAGE
HABS No. IA-193
Page 25



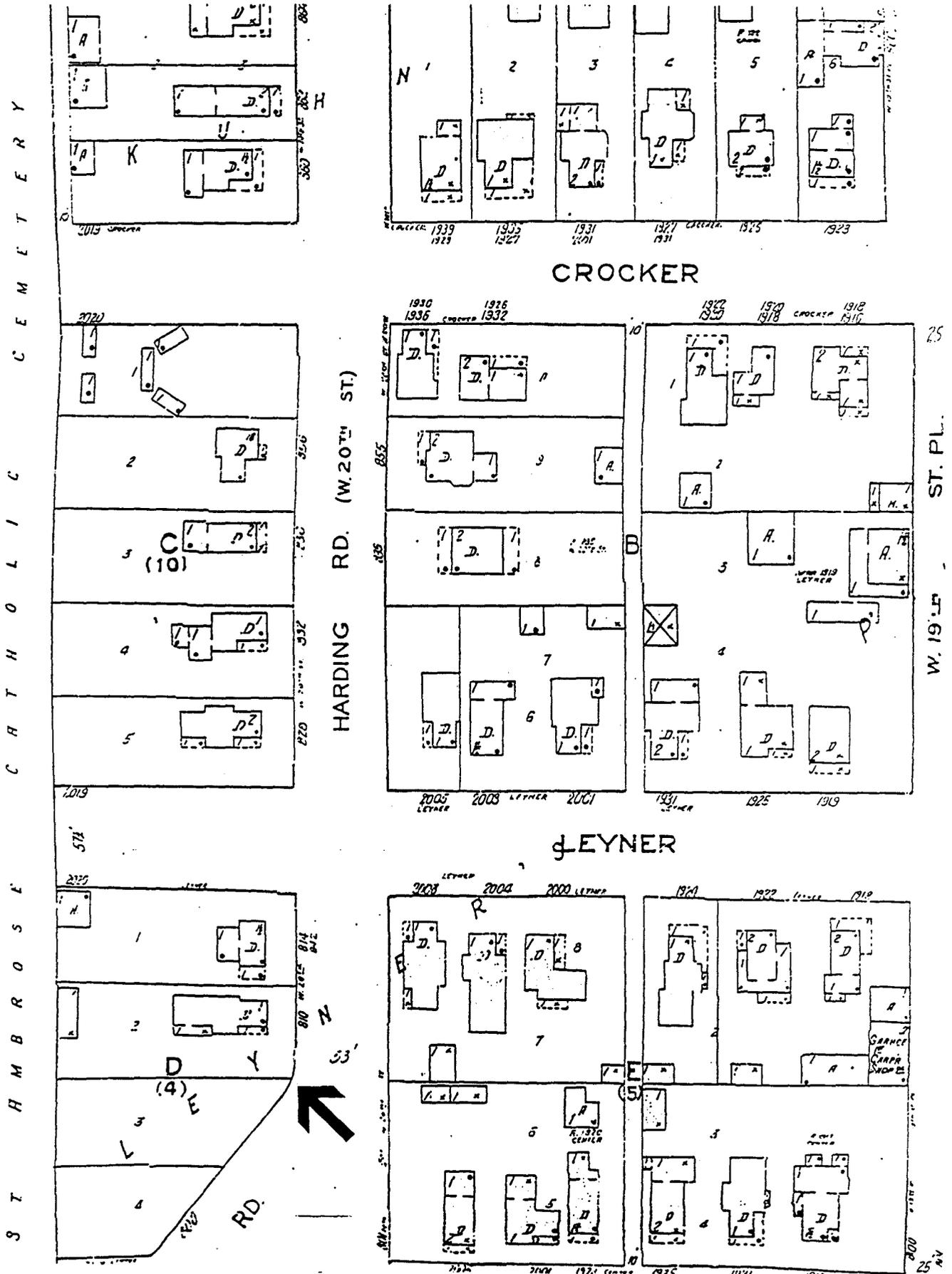
PAGE 51

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

Figure 4



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

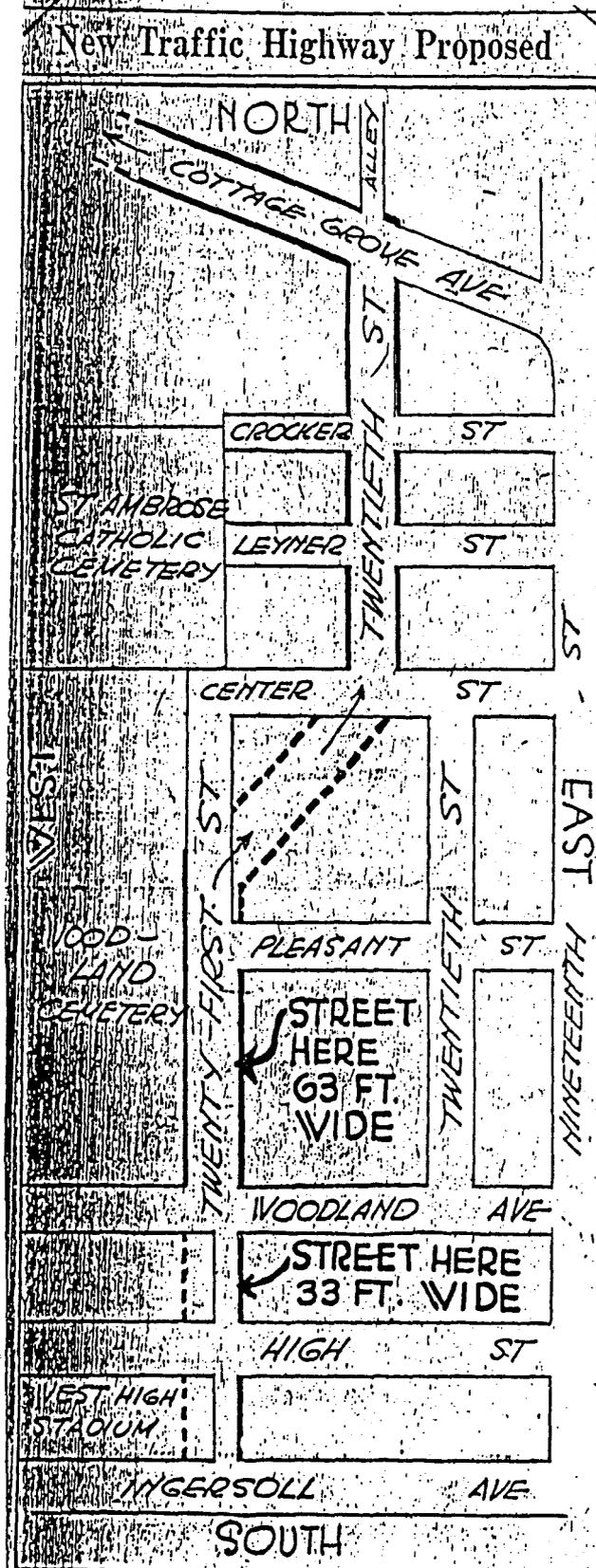


Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1920-1943.

Figure 5



PLAN FOR HARDING ROAD 1919



Source: Des Moines Register, October 20, 1919.



Figure 6