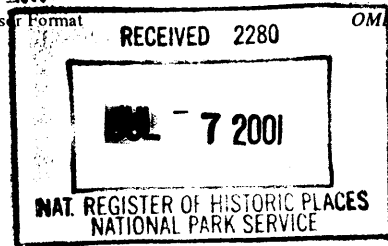


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

855



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" on the appropriate line or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name HENSHIE-BRIGGS ROW HOUSE
other names/site number Wetherell Ericsson Leusink Architects

2. Location

street & number 1106 High Street N/A not for publication
city or town Des Moines N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50309

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Rowell J. Lake June 27, 2001
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet) the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the 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)

Edson H. Beall
Signature of Keeper

8/8/01
Date of Action

Henshie-Briggs Row House

Polk County, Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many lines as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one line)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- X private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

- X building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Contributing Noncontributing
1 buildings
sites
structures
objects
1 0 Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/

foundation Brick

Italianate

walls Brick

roof Synthetic

other Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Henshie-Briggs Row House
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" on one or more lines for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" on all the lines that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

Circa 1883

Significant Dates

Circa 1883

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance - (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliography References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- previous determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Record
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historical Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository

Henshie-Briggs Row House
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 5 4 4 7 2 5 0 4 6 0 3 8 8 0
	Verbal Boundary Description

Zone Easting Northing

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

2	--- --- ---
	Boundary Justification

Zone Easting Northing

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

3	--- --- ---
---	-----------------

Zone Easting Northing

4	--- --- ---
---	-----------------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William C. Page, Public Historian; Joanne R. Page, Project Associate
organization Wetherell Ericsson Leusink Architects date December 16, 2000
street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue (Page) telephone 515-243-5740; FAX 515-243-7285
city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50313-5017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs - Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items - (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Wetherell Ericsson Leusink Architects
street & number 1106 High Street telephone 515-283-2315
city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50309

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Henshie-Briggs Row House is a 2-story, masonry, single-family dwelling, completed and first occupied circa 1883. It features a brick foundation, brick load-bearing walls, a flat roof, and architectural detailing influenced by the Italianate style of architecture. The integrity of this building is fine. Located in downtown Des Moines, the building is a rare, surviving example of a row house, as built in the city during the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century. The building is presently used as an architects' office, having been rehabilitated in 1970 from an earlier use as a multiple-family rental.

The Henshie-Briggs Row House and its site are under threat. The Gateway West project, a partnership between the City of Des Moines and the private sector, is now underway to redevelop the western portion of downtown Des Moines. The Henshie-Briggs Row House stands within or close by that area of redevelopment. The City of Des Moines has employed its power of eminent domain to acquire property in the project area. The owners of the Henshie-Briggs Row House are concerned that this might occur with their property and believe that its listing on the National Register will call public attention to the property's historical significance and encourage protection.

Row HOUSE

The footprint of this row house is a rectangle measuring approximately 22' x 34' (width by depth). The first floor, second floor, and basement contain a total area of approximately 2,142 square feet. The facade of the building is setback about 4' both from the public right-of-way and the building to the east with which it shares a party wall.

Exterior

The north wall (the building's facade) is constructed of rough faced, soft red brick, laid in running bond and painted white. The east wall is a party wall shared with the building at 1100-1104 High Street. The south wall is cement plaster over brick. A fire escape, added to the south wall during the 1970s, was subsequently removed.

The west wall is plywood siding over an original brick party wall. When the adjoining building directly to the west was razed in 1979, this party wall was exposed. To cover and protect it, the owners devised an unusual and interesting solution. The plywood siding was installed, a design simulating the building's west section was constructed--full-scale--of wood strips, and the entire west elevation painted blue and white to imitate a blueprint drawing. Careful planning efforts were required to implement this design:

Since it was likely that the local zoning enforcement office would construe the effort as a sign, too large to be in conformity with the sign ordinance, preparations were made to proceed through the appeal procedure. Result: the zoning board of adjustment ruled the handsome new wall a "work of art," not a sign.

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Section number 7 Page 2

CFN-259-1116

Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

Incidentally, the firm logo in the lower righthand corner is the only "sign" in evidence on the wall--and it is fully in conformance with size requirements in the local law. (*Building Progress*)

This unusual design remains on the building's west wall today. (See Continuation Sheet 7-13.)

The building rests on a masonry foundation. A combination of materials is used, including stone, brick, and concrete block. During the rehabilitation of the building in the 1970s, a portion of the north wall of the foundation was rebuilt using concrete block. These repairs are visible from the exterior of the building, but the concrete block was painted to simulate the original windows once present in the repaired wall. Their hood molds remain intact.

The building's fenestration generally features 1/1 double hung sash. These window openings on the first and second floors and the basement of the facade are surmounted by cast stone hood molds.

The row house possesses a series of decorative architectural details. Pronounced among them is the building's cornice. Constructed of wood, it includes paired brackets at each end of the facade, with single brackets spaced between these pairs. A series of corbels is situated between the brackets. A frieze is situated below this cornice. It is constructed of brick and features three arches, each supported by brick corbeling. Other decorative features on the facade include cast stone hood molds above the windows and a transom over the front entry. The front door is a prominent feature of the building's primary facade. It features a pair of paneled doors with original hardware.

The row house is presently covered with a flat roof of rubber membrane installed in 1997. The building possess one brick chimney, located on the east party wall. This chimney is unusable and has been roofed over.

Interior

The building's floor plan features a two-room depth and a one-room width. The front entry leads into a hall, which runs three-quarters of the way to the rear of the building. The stairs to the second floor are located on the west side of the hall, and an entrance to the front parlor is located on its east side. Access to the basement is gained through a door beneath the staircase at the rear of the hall. Another door at the rear of the hall leads to the back rooms.

The front parlor on the first floor features plaster walls and softwood floors. A non-operational fireplace is situated on the east wall. It features a black slate mantel and fireplace surrounds. This fireplace has a tiny flue designed for a coke burning grate, evident by the firebox's lack of depth. Another fireplace was located on the same wall in the room to the rear of the parlor. It too was designed to burn coke. This fireplace is now abandoned. (Gail E. Marquart interview) The second floor features softwood floors and plaster walls.

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CFN-259-1116

Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

The unfinished basement features a poured concrete floor. The basement houses the archives of several architects. These historically significant documents include the work of Oliver O. Smith, Frank E. Wetherell, and the partners of the present firm. When the building was used as a residential rental, the basement might have served as a bedroom. When the building was converted into an architect's office, a large dresser with mirror was found in the basement. (William J. Wagner interview)

Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of the row house began in 1970. Most of this work involved clearing the building of debris and cleaning it. For example, the first floor of the building had eight coats of wallpaper, and in between these coats, there were additional coats of paint. (Gail E. Marquart interview)

The rehabilitation stabilized certain structural problems with the building. This included rebuilding the north wall of the basement, as discussed above. Some other, more minor, alterations were made. A wood, gable-end roof was removed above the building's front door. This was a Twentieth Century accretion. The approach steps to the front entry were redesigned. Originally they led perpendicularly from the door to the street. The rehabilitation of the building redesigned these steps, and now they are situated parallel to the building. This redesign provided a safer access to the front door. On the interior, the upstairs bathroom was converted to a half-bath, and a new bathroom was installed on the first floor. This involved some partition wall changes in the southwest corner of the building. (See Continuation Sheet 7-12.) The first floor ceilings were dropped slightly to allow for some mechanical installations.

This rehabilitation was begun under the aegis of the architectural firm of Wagner Marquart Architects, a partnership of William J. Wagner and Gail E. Marquart. At this time, the partnership rented the building. (Later in the 1970s, John H. Wetherell joined the two partners to form the firm of Wagner Marquart Wetherell Architects. Still later Lawrence L. (Larry) Ericsson joined the partnership.) In 1980, this firm of four partners purchased the building on contract from the estate of Harry Hansen, from whom they had leased the building. Both Wagner and Marquart remained active in this firm until their retirement. Then, in 1991, Wetherell and Ericsson purchased the building.

SITE

This row house is situated near the western edge of downtown Des Moines. When originally constructed, the row house stood as one unit within a series of eight row houses situated along High Street. Its location was the third from the west. (See Continuation Sheet 7-9.) As the population of Des Moines burgeoned in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, this land was heavily redeveloped for commercial purposes. Most of the row houses and other single-family dwellings were razed, and many commercial edifices took their place.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

The continued existence of this row house has been threatened, on and off, for more than a quarter century. Writing circa 1976, one of the then partners of the architectural firm stated that:

The possibility exists that, if the property is not purchased by Wagner Marquart Wetherell Ericsson Architects, that the bldg. could be destroyed like many other older structures in the neighborhood to make way for a parking lot. (National Register Nomination Questionnaire)

Although the purchase, alluded to above, preserved the building, it is again under threat today. A new and massive commercial redevelopment project, known as Gateway West, plans to redevelop a substantial portion of the western portion of downtown Des Moines and has succeeded already in the demolition of several historically significant properties. Although the row house is not currently identified specifically as a candidate for redevelopment, the present owners--who are committed to its preservation--wish to call attention to the building's historical significance by listing it on the National Register of Historic Places.

The property possesses a small garden at the rear of the row house. It is mostly paved with brick. A few small trees are situated on the property and include a Cottonwood, Locust, and Red Bud. A Greenspire Linden was planted in 1982 between the pedestrian walk and High Street to replace another Greenspire planted at the same spot in 1980. This tree had been broken off at its base by an out-of-control automobile on February 5, 1982. The replacement Linden was subsequently destroyed by another out-of-control vehicle.

The parcel of land, on which the building is situated, is located within the following two plats:

Part of Campbell & McMullen's Addition to the Town of Fort Des Moines.
Official Plat of S. W. 1/4 of Lot 6 and All of 7 Rose's Addition.

(See Section 10 for the property's legal description and Continuation Sheet 7-8 for maps.) Although the reason or reasons for the property's location in two different plats is unclear, it caused difficulty in researching the property's history.

The parcel of land on which the building rests measures approximately 22' x 60' (width by depth). The property stands on the south side of High Street. The row house faces northwest. It is abutted on the east by a commercial building at 1100-1104 High Street. This building replaced three row houses in the series in the early Twentieth Century. A party wall is shared by these two buildings. The buildings west of the row house along the 1100 block of High Street have all been razed, and the land is now used as a parking lot. A parking lot is situated across High Street to the north. An automotive body repair shop was located south of the alley at the rear of the row house. A few Locust trees stand along High Street to the east of the Henshie-Briggs Row House.

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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

SURROUNDINGS

The immediate surroundings of the row house are generally level, with a slight slope of the land downwards to the south into the flood plain of the Raccoon River. The early Twentieth Century redevelopment of this area, as described above, has been itself substantially redeveloped over the last ten years. Two nearby neighbors include the Principal Financial Group and Iowa Methodist Medical Center. These institutions have constructed many new buildings, parking ramps, and surface parking in the area, so that today the general feeling of the surroundings is one of transition.

The Henshie-Briggs Row House remains the only surviving building in the western sections of downtown Des Moines from the initial period of its construction. The Sherman Hill Historic District (NRHP) begins about three blocks to the northwest. This is a residential neighborhood of single-family and multiple-family dwellings.

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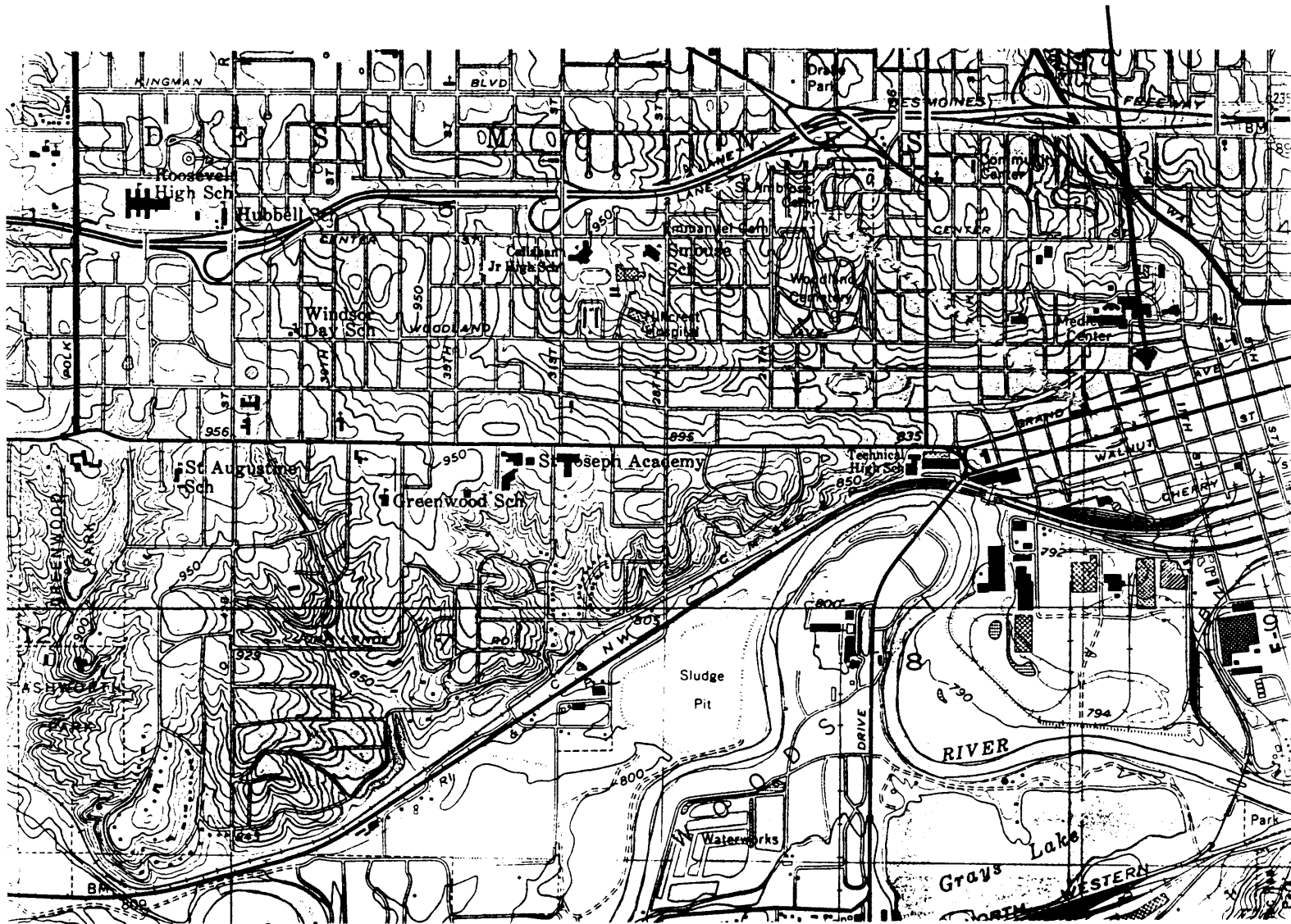
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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

SITE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



Source: U.S.G.S. Map (7.5 Minute Series), Des Moines SW Quadrangle, 1956, Photorevised 1976.



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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANIMETRIC MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



Scale: 1 inch = 200 feet.

Source: City of Des Moines Community Development Department.



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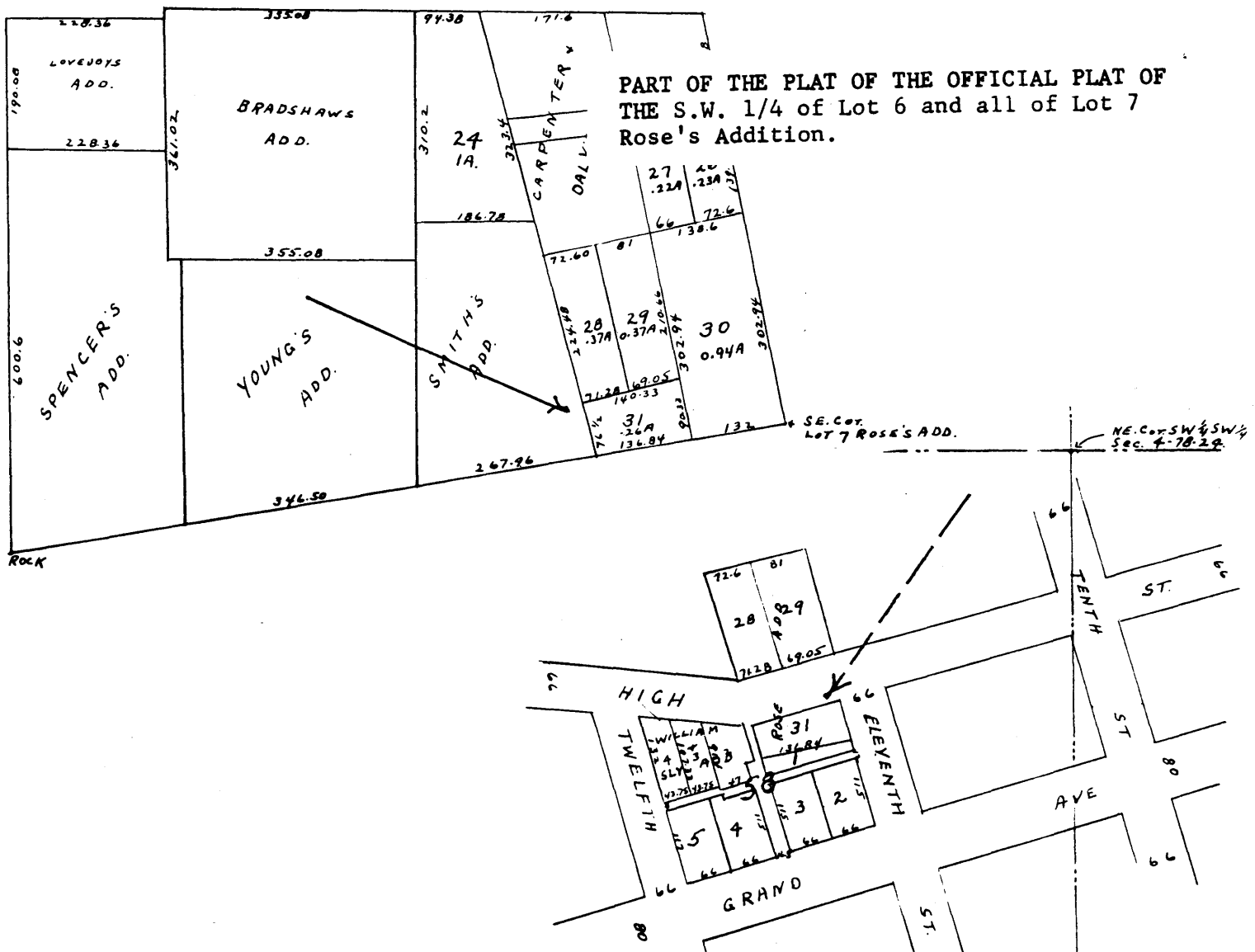
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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

VICINITY MAP



The top map shows the tract of land (solid arrow) Henshie and Briggs purchased in 1883.
The bottom map locates that tract (dashed arrow) in relationship to today's street system.
Henshie and Briggs constructed eight row houses in this tract.



Source: Abstract of Title.

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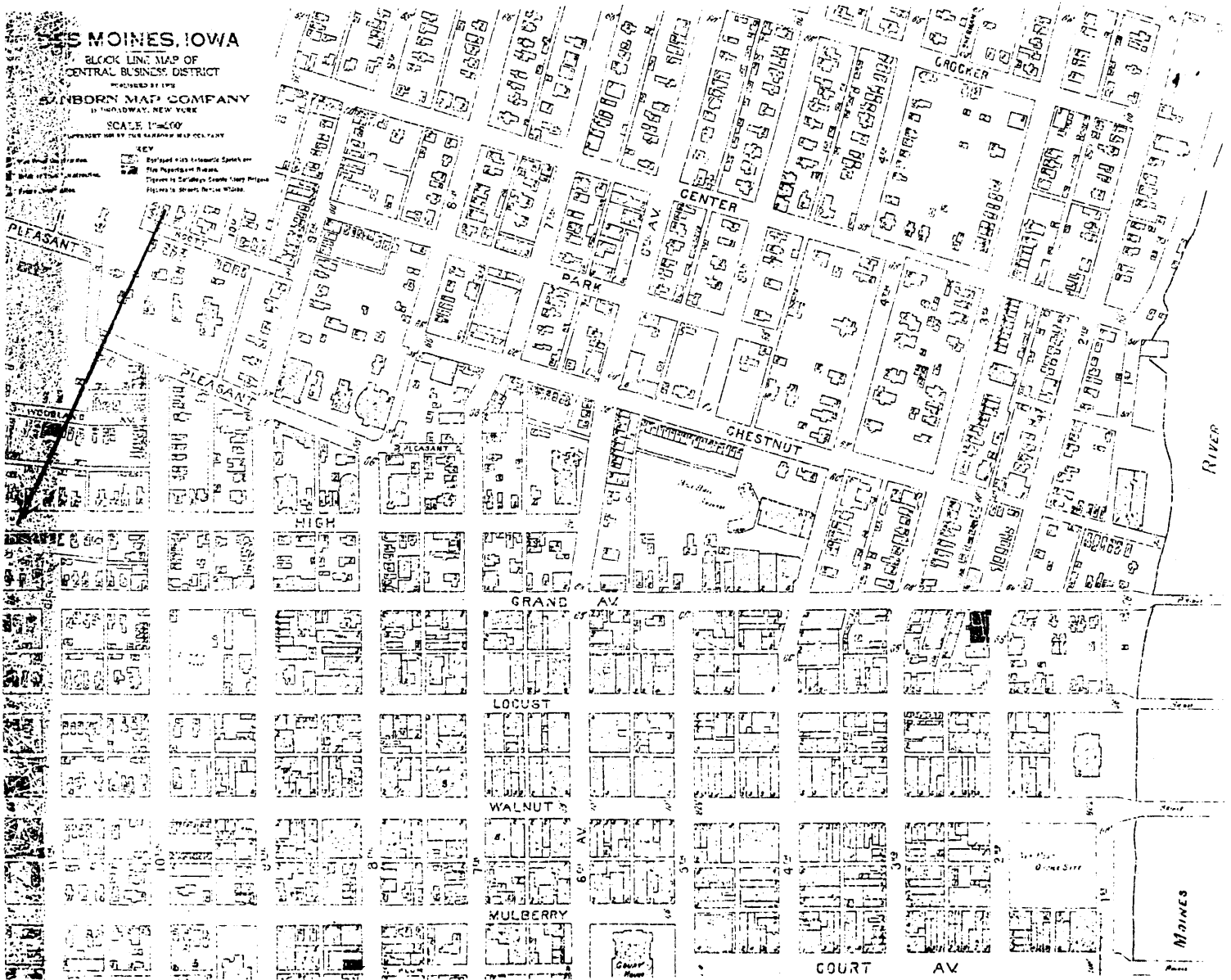
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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

1884 FIRE INSURANCE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



This map shows the Henshie and Briggs row houses in place.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, Des Moines, 1884.



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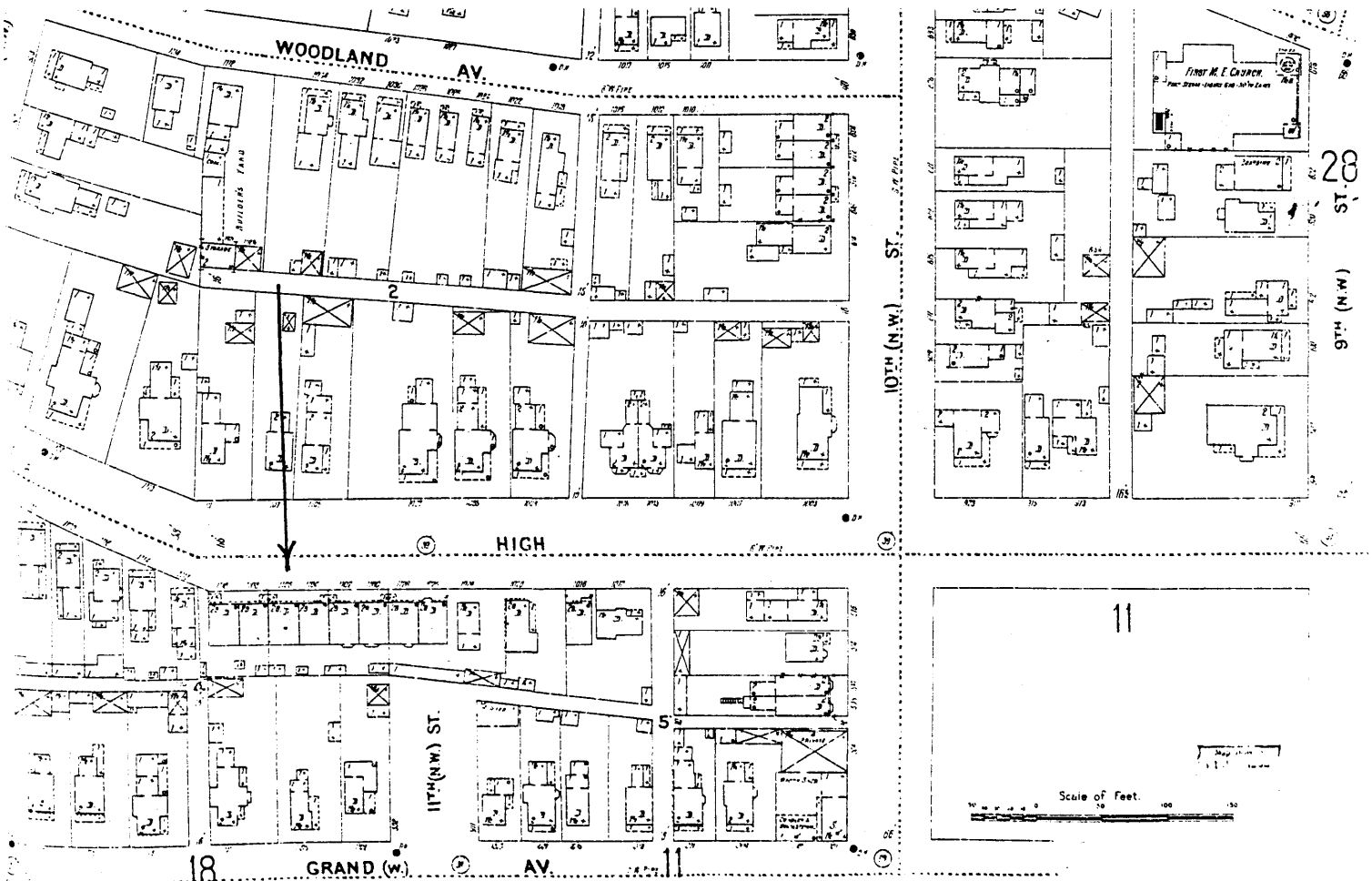
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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

1901 FIRE INSURANCE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



This map shows the eight Henshie-Briggs Row Houses. The property at 1106 High Street is third from the left.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, Des Moines, 1901.

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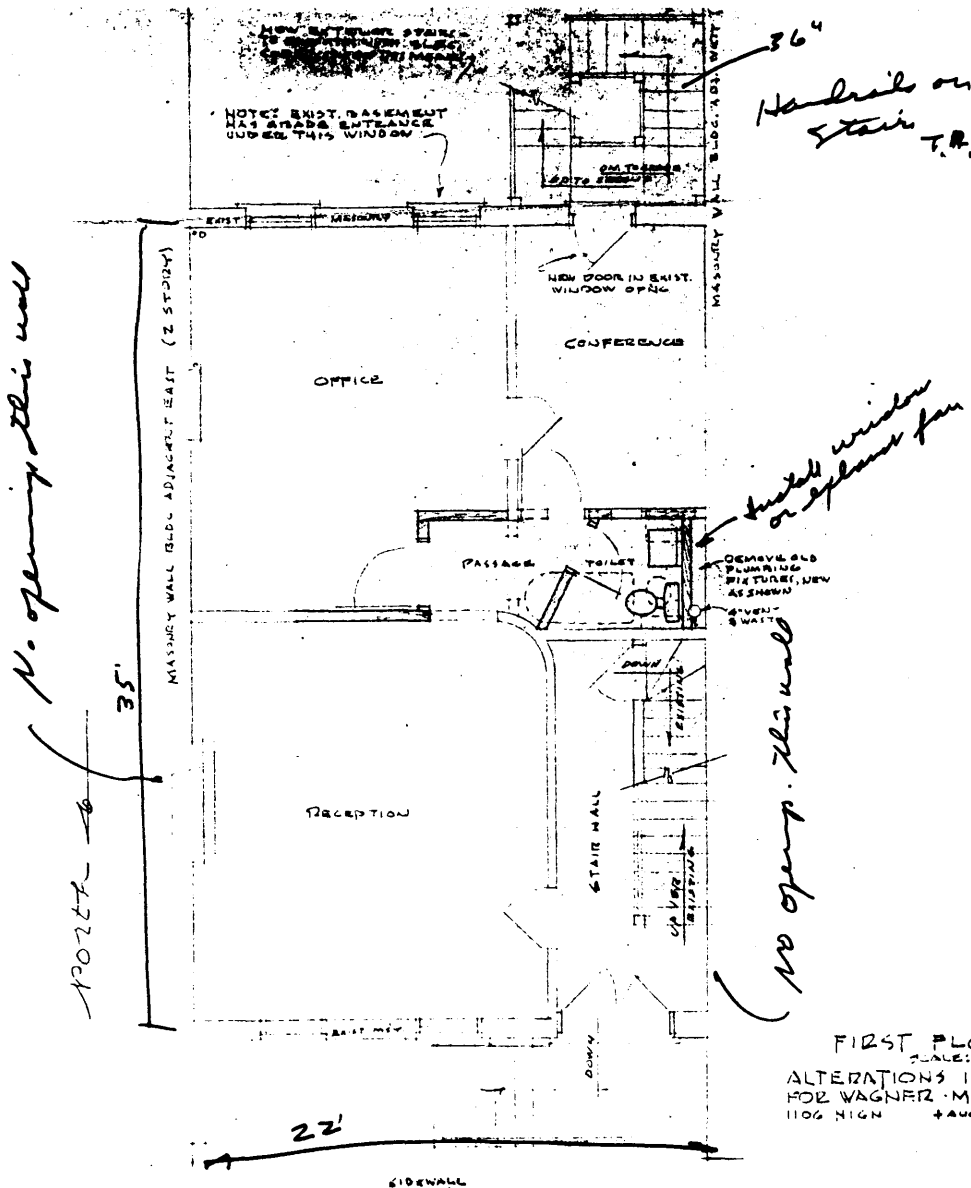
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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

AUGUST 1970



This plan shows the configuration of existing walls behind the parlor and stair hall and their redesign in 1970.

Source: Wetherell Ericsson Leusink Architects.

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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT: "A FORM OF ART"



The west elevation of the Henshie-Briggs Row House as redesigned in 1979, the year, the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the City of Des Moines "determined the treatment of the wall is not a sign and that no variance is needed; the wall treatment is determined to be a form of art."

Source: *Building Progress*, April 1981.

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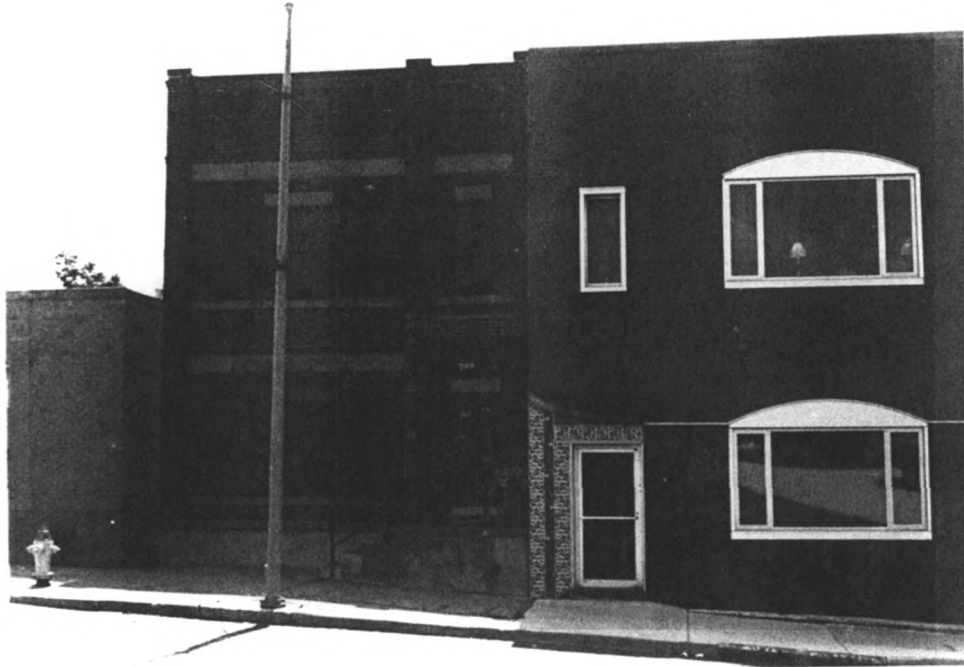
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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

ANOTHER DES MOINES' ROW HOUSE



Located at 709 East Locust Street, this row house (center) shows how later real estate developments sited buildings directly adjacent to the public right-of-way, rather than allowing for a shallow facade setback.

Source: William C. Page, photographer, 2000.

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National Park Service**

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CFN-259-1116

Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Completed and first occupied circa 1883, the Henshie-Briggs Row House is architecturally significant, under National Register Criterion C, as a fine example of a row house. Although popular in Des Moines during the Nineteenth Century, exceedingly few examples of this architectural form survive in the city today. Its architectural design is influenced by Italianate styling.

The Henshie-Briggs Row House is of historical interest because it calls attention to the redevelopment of the west end of downtown Des Moines. In the Victorian era, single-family dwellings predominated in this area. That changed during the early Twentieth Century, when the west end redeveloped in mixed commercial and denser residential land use. The Henshie-Briggs Row House is one of the very few properties, which call attention to this first generation of buildings.

The Henshie-Briggs Row House is of historical interest because it illustrates how the population boom of metropolitan Des Moines in the 1880s effected growth in the core city as well as in the area's expanding suburbs.

The period of significance for the Henshie-Briggs Row House under Criterion C is circa 1883, the time when the building was constructed.

The property contains one contributing resource for this nomination--the house, which is classified as a building, along with its site.

ARCHITECTURE

The Henshie-Briggs Row House is architecturally significant locally, under National Register Criterion C, as a rare, surviving example of a vernacular row house in Des Moines, a once common architectural type within the Victorian walking city of Des Moines. The building is influenced by Italianate architectural styling.

In Des Moines, row houses have also been called townhouses. (Ruth Gatti) Although both words denote substantially the same architectural form, the word "row house" is of historic usage in Des Moines and is used in this nomination for that reason. "Townhouse" appears to be of later use locally.

Row House

The row house appeared in America during the Eighteenth Century, and, across the nation, row houses provided most of America's urban housing stock during much of the Nineteenth Century. City streets were lined with row houses--some of pretentious mansion design, many of solid middle class construction, and others cheaply put up as rentals. During this period, the detached single-family dwelling was the exception in the nation's big cities. With the advent of rapid public transportation

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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

during the second half of the Nineteenth Century, this architectural typology changed. As urban historian Sam Bass Warner, Jr., has pointed out:

Sometime during the 1860's or 1870's the balance of forces shifted. During the last third of the nineteenth century the suburban styles became the majority practice and the town row house became the minority one. Except for continued construction in the Back Bay [of Boston] the row house became a thing of the past. The attraction of the rural ideal and the continued press of industrialization and immigration turned the middle class against city living as it had been known in the past. (Warner:143)

Further militating against the social status of the row house was its conversion into a multiple-family dwelling--a phenomenon which occurred as more and more city dwellers relocated to the nation's Victorian suburbs.

In Des Moines, the row house had never achieved the same acceptance and wide-spread popularity as in the nation's urban centers. With a small population and abundance of land, Des Moines' development encouraged the construction of detached single-family dwellings. This response was in harmony with the rural ideal, a notion which paralleled the trends of urban living in America throughout the Nineteenth Century.

As that century progressed in Des Moines, the city's downtown was moving from the Court Avenue area northwards to Walnut Street, today one of its principal streets. According to one historian:

It is difficult to realize that as late as 1883, Walnut street was irreverently referred to by the leading daily of the city as "Rum Row," and "Rat Row," because of the "long strings of tumble-down frame shanties owned by town-lot misers." The boom in Des Moines finally reached Walnut street [in 1884]. (Brigham:297)

Still, the row house manifested its presence in Des Moines, and this expression of the architectural tradition in the Henshie-Briggs Row House provides one example of its force, even in rural parts of the nation. Sanborn fire insurance maps exist for Des Moines, the first dating from 1884. These maps shows that the row house frequently occurred within the first ring of residential construction adjacent to the downtown. In 1884, for example, a row of about 17 row houses stood on the south side of Chestnut Street in the 500 block. Six row houses stood immediately around the corner to the west on 6th Avenue. Another series of six row houses stood in the 900 block of Walnut Street. Nine row houses stood along 3rd Street between Chestnut and Center Streets, and another series of six stood immediately across the street to the north. (See Continuation Sheet 9.) None of these remains extant. Additional historical analysis of the nearby Sherman Hill Historic District might reveal the presence of row houses there, but none remains extant.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

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CFN-259-1116

Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

Later fire insurance maps provide additional information about Des Moines row houses. The 1901 maps picture the Henshie-Briggs Row House and its environs. Eight row houses are included in this row, lining the south side of High Street to the west of 11th Street. Another row of five is situated on the north side of High Street directly east of 13th Street. Yet another row is located in the 1400 block of Grand Avenue. It contains 14 row houses. Two commercial buildings are associated with it and occupy the corner lot. The double house, a related type of multiple-family dwelling, is also evident in these Sanborn maps.

In spite of the occurrence of these multiple-family dwellings, all the early maps of the city show that the single-family dwelling dominated the city's residential construction.

What was the fate of the city's row houses? Further research will yield more detailed information, but, at the present time it is evident that many of these buildings suffered from neglect, decay, and, ultimately, scorn. Writing in the 1890s about Des Moines' housing boom, the *Iowa State Register* newspaper reported 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. (Undated clipping, "Towards a Greater Des Moines" MPDF file, Iowa SHPO Archives)

Since then, the row house has become a rare architectural form in Des Moines. The architectural partnership of William J. Wagner and Gail E. Marquart recognized this phenomenon. According to them, the Henshie-Briggs Row House

is the only row house left in the downtown area of Des Moines where at one time there were many. (National Register Nomination Questionnaire)

The architects--driven by their love for historic architecture--leased the Henshie-Briggs Row House in 1970 from its owner and rehabilitated the building into an office for their practice. It became an icon for the firm.

Subsequent publicity has reiterated Wagner and Marquart's claim of uniqueness for the building. Writing in 1971, one newspaper woman reported that:

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William Wagner and Gail Marquart have formed their own partnership and set up shop in what must be the last town house in downtown Des Moines. (McLaughlin)

The building received further public acknowledgment of its novel design and its unique setting in 1994. Writing in the "Meet Me on the Corner," another newspaper woman reported that:

This building at 1106 High St. is said to be the last townhouse in downtown Des Moines. (Gatti)

The headline to this feature--"Old townhouse still on High St."-- expressed in no uncertain terms an amazement that the building remained extant. Unstated but implied was the propensity in Des Moines to redevelop rather than preserve downtown property. More publicity followed. In 1981, for example, the trade journal *Building Progress* published a photofeature under the headline "Born of necessity, a blueprint wall becomes a Work of Art."

Italianate Styling

Italianate and the related Second Empire styling dominated row house design in America between the decades of 1860 and 1880 and remained popular longer in the less settled parts of the country like Iowa. This once rather prevalent form of building is now all but extinct in Des Moines, examples having given way to urban redevelopment for denser use of the land. Within this context, the Henshie-Briggs Row House is one of only two surviving examples. The other is located at 709 East Locust Street. It is of somewhat later construction and influenced by Late Victorian architectural styling.

The Italianate styling of the Henshie-Briggs Row House is most evident in the projecting cornice with its brackets, the frieze and its arched design, and the flat roof concealed behind that cornice. Other characteristic features of this influence include the arched windows in the double front doors and the heavy, cast stone hood molds above the first floor, second floor, and basement floor windows.

Row houses in Des Moines were usually constructed of brick. This provided protection against fire. The doors of these row houses were situated off center on the primary facade. Hallways to the back of the first floor and stairs to the upper floors and basement were located along one of the party walls between the row houses.

TOWN BUILDING

The Henshie-Briggs Row House is of historical interest associated with town building practices in Des Moines. The building calls attention to the redevelopment of the west end of downtown Des Moines from residential to mixed residential and commercial land use and illustrates how the population boom

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of metropolitan Des Moines in the 1880s affected growth in the core city as well as in the area's expanding suburbs.

Background

On September 20, 1881, Peter and Margaret Costello--who held title to the land on which the Henshie-Briggs Row House stands--sold a strip of adjacent land to the City of Des Moines. This strip measured 21.5' x 140', and the city paid \$750 for it. (*Deed Record Books*) The city purchased this and other adjoining land to push High Street through from Holcomb's Addition west to 12th Street. Prior to this time, High Street did not exist along this stretch. Because the Henshie-Briggs Row House is oriented to High Street, we can assume that it (and its nonextant sisters) was not built until after High Street was constructed.

In January 1883, the Costellos sold the tract of land upon which the Henshie-Briggs Row House stands to Isaac Henshie and Moore Briggs, along with the tract of land which its nonextant sisters occupied. (See Continuation Sheet 7-9.) This tract of land embraced the following:

Commencing at a point on the South line of Roses Addition to the Town of Ft. Des Moines now City of Des Moines, Iowa, two chains westerly from the Southeast corner of said Addition thence N 22 degrees 20 minutes West 90 feet and four inches to South line of High Street thence South 63 degrees 55 minutes West 141 1/3 feet to a stake thence South 25 degrees 20 minutes East 76 1/2 feet to a stake thence North 70 degrees 20 minutes East 136 feet 7 inches to the place of beginning, containing 26/100 of an acre as deeded from P. M. Cassady and wife to Louisa C. Denison and Louisa C. Denison to P. Castelo.

Also fractional Lot 1 in Block 58 in Campbell & McMullens Addition to the City of Des Moines, now in the corporate limits of said City (all the above excepting the amount deeded to the City of Des Moines for streets purposes on south side of High Street). (Abstract of Title:No. 32)

Continuation Sheet 7-9 pictures this tract of land. Henshie and Briggs each possessed one-half interest in it. Its purchase price was \$3,000. (*Ibid.*)

Henshie and Briggs proceeded to divide this tract of land into eight parcels and to erect one row house on each parcel. This is evident from a subsequent sale of two of these parcels. In December 1884 Isaac Henshie died. In 1885, Sarah J. Henshie, Isaac's widow, sold to Briggs the Henshie one-half interest in the property Henshie and Briggs had purchased from the Costellos. The purchase price for Henshie's one-half interest in two of the eight parcels cost Briggs \$4,000. (*Deed Record Books*) The difference between the price of the 1883 tract of land and the 1885 price of two of its parcels shows that the land had been improved. An 1884 Sanborn fire insurance map pictures these row houses. (See Continuation Sheet 7-9.)

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The date of construction of the Henshie-Briggs Row House--circa 1883--is documented in the above discussion. Other suggestions as to date of construction have also been put forward. The Polk County Assessor's Office dates the building's construction to the year 1880. This source is generally reliable for dates of construction, although exactitude diminishes as the property's age increases. A former owner of the building dated its construction as "1885." (National Register Nomination Questionnaire) The rationale for that year selection was because the "*first mortgage* appears about 1885 [underscore in red]." (Archive files Wetherell Ericsson Leusink Architects) These dates of construction for the Henshie-Briggs Row House are outside the range of possibility for the reasons discussed above.

Unfortunately, a newspaper search of local publications from 1878 to 1885 found no reference to the construction of these row houses. (John P. Zeller)

West End Development

The Henshie-Briggs Row House is of historical interest because it calls attention to town building in Des Moines. During the late Nineteenth Century the west end of downtown Des Moines developed as a residential section of the city. The Henshie-Briggs Row House, constructed as one in a series of eight row houses erected on the south side of High Street between 11th and 12th Streets, calls attention to this phenomenon.

During the early Twentieth Century, the west end of downtown Des Moines was substantially redeveloped. Previously, single-family dwellings, row houses, and some double houses had predominated in the area. In the 1910s, many new apartment buildings, or "flats," as they were sometimes called, began to appear. Located within walking distance of all the big insurance companies, retail establishments, banks, and other commercial houses, these apartments offered downtown workers affordable housing, comfortable and efficient living units, and the convenience of walking to work. This last characteristic carried over habits from the early and mid-Victorian periods in Des Moines. (Page and Rogers)

During the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, the west end also became a center for automobile sales and services. These businesses clustered along Walnut and Locust Streets from about 10th to about 16th Streets. This corridor became known as "Auto Row." Other retail and commercial establishments also flourished in the west end, catering to neighborhood residents and other downtown workers and shoppers.

By the mid-Twentieth Century, the redevelopment of the west end was complete. Few buildings from earlier times remained extant. The west end had become a readily recognizable subsection of downtown Des Moines. It possessed scores of multiple-story, brick buildings of good architectural design and featured a greater mix of commercial and residential land use than the downtown core. All these qualities lent a distinctive character to the west end. Although its boundaries were always somewhat fluid, they included, at their greatest extent, High Street (both sides) on the north, 18th Street on the west, Locust Street on the south, and 10th Street on the east.

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Row House Construction

The construction of the Henshie-Briggs Row House illustrates how the population boom of metropolitan Des Moines in the 1880s affected growth in the core city as well as in the area's expanding suburbs.

The 1880s witnessed a population boom in Des Moines and an explosion of suburban expansion. A frenzy of real estate speculation occurred in North Des Moines--"the big suburb"--and in other sections of the metropolitan area surrounding the core city. (Page and Walroth:*passim*) The construction of the Henshie-Briggs row houses shows that this population boom also effected the core city. Undeveloped property was now improved with new buildings, going hand-in-hand with suburban expansion. These row houses also suggest that dense construction typified the residential growth in the core city, while detached single-family dwellings were the norm in more outlying sections and in the suburbs.

Little is known about the life of Isaac Henshie to date. He is not listed in the 1876 Des Moines city directory, and he died in 1884, a period of less than eight years. Henshie must have arrived in the city with solid financial capability or possessed considerable skills to effect the construction of the eight row houses along High Street. Little is also known about the life of Moore Briggs. He too is not listed in the 1876 city directory, and he vanishes from the Abstract of Title for the 1106 High Street property in 1885. Taken together, however, the ability of these two partners to amass the requisite capital to construct eight row houses indicates their financial stature. Their intent in this construction appears to have been investment.

Following Isaac's death, in September 1885, Sarah J. Henshie sold her family's interest in the 1106 High Street property to Moore Briggs. Less than one month later, Briggs transferred the title to the property to Martha J. Locke and W. M. Locke in consideration of the purchase price of \$8,000, exactly double his purchase price of the Henshie family's one-half interest in it. The quick sale of this property in 1885 indicates a strong real estate market in the city at that time. Further research is required to determine the status of Briggs' interests (if any) in the other row house properties on High Street at this time. Additional research is also required to determine if either the Henshies or the Briggs actually lived in these row houses, or whether their real estate venture was strictly as a rental investment.

Oral History

A sense of the neighborhood immediately surrounding the Henshie-Briggs Row House can be discerned from a telephone conversation from a Mrs. Bigsby (telephone #515-225-1963) on January 12, 1976, which reported that:

Her grandfather lived in one of our row houses, which extended east to corner of 11th. He lived in 2nd unit from 11th. She made many visits to him from age 5 on. (Assume time early 20th cent.) She is very knowledgeable re the whole neighborhood about that time,

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locations of various buildings--"Tombstone" Emporium at 10th & Grand, grocery store at 11th, exist. bldg. @ corner of 11th & High originally a generating plant for IPALCO.

Not many kids in neighborhood, mostly elders, but one youngster supposedly was (or became) member of James Gang. Mrs. B. would be most happy to impart any & all info. at any time should our interest so direct.

McGarf

(Archive files of Wetherell Ericsson Leusink Architects)

"McGarf" was the nickname of Gail E. Marquart, who made these notes for his office files after his telephone conversation with Bigsby.

The attention this building received in the 1970s brought additional information to the fore. For example, Robert George Harritt III told the building's owners that he used to go there with his grandmother to collect rent. He was six or seven years old at the time. He recalls that, in 1918, the upstairs apartment rented for \$12.00 per month to Mrs. Lincoln, the first floor apartment for \$20.00 per month to Nellie Furst, and the basement for \$10.00 per month to an individual named "Bostedter." (Robert George Harritt III) The 1920 city directory corroborates Lincoln and Furst's occupancy of the building, although shows no occupant in the basement. (City Directory 1920:1509)

Today, the Henshie-Briggs Row House remains one of the very few--and perhaps only--extant building from the Nineteenth Century surviving in the west end of downtown Des Moines. Its presence calls attention to the earlier, residential land use in this section of the city.

REPRESENTATION IN OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS

The Henshie-Briggs Row House was included in a windshield survey in the summer of 1974 by Steven Elmets of the Department of Architecture at Iowa State University. This survey consisted of one photograph of the building's facade, a map showing its location, and its street address. There was no architectural or historical evaluation.

The Henshie-Briggs Row House was surveyed in 1975 as Iowa Site Inventory Number 77-020-535 under the direction of John Maves of Iowa State University. That survey determined that the row house was "Style: Victorian" and noted that:

Architectural Condition: B. Non-conforming, of possible architectural significance. The structure is of marked contrast to its environment but may be architecturally significant.
(Maves)

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Although the Maves survey rated many extant buildings in Des Moines, it employed its own rating system rather than using National Register criteria and categories. As a result, the Maves ratings are difficult to analyze and use. This survey also provided no architectural or historical evaluations, so its completed site sheets consist solely of Maves' ratings, as exemplified above.

POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The site's potential for archaeological significance is, as yet, unevaluated. Historical archaeological investigation might uncover on adjacent property the traces of the other row houses along High Street. Such investigation might also discover traces of privies or other nonextant outbuildings on the Henshie-Briggs Row House property, such as the outbuilding shown on the 1901 Sanborn fire insurance map.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND REGISTRATION

As more is learned about the lives of Isaac Henshie and Moore Briggs, this information can be used to flesh out their thumbnail sketches in this nomination and to corroborate or amend its conclusions. For example, it is possible that the two men were related, perhaps by marriage. Such a connection might help explain the motivation of their partnership.

Further research can flesh out the business relationship between Isaac Henshie and Moore Briggs. A title search is recommended for the entire tract of land Henshie and Briggs purchased from Peter and Margaret Costello in 1883 and described above. This research will show how the Henshie-Briggs partnership parcelized the tract for the construction of their row houses. Abstracts of title for each of these parcels, when brought down to the 1890s or early 1900s, will then provide more information about the partners' business activities in this real estate venture.

The City of Des Moines has designated the row house at 709 East Locust Street a local landmark.

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ORAL HISTORY

Telephone conversation between a Mrs. (Florence E. [?]) Bigsby and "McGarf" (Gail E. Marquart) on January 12, 1976. Telephone notes in archive files of Wetherell Ericsson Leusink Architects signed "McGarf."

Telephone conversation between William J. Wagner and William C. Page on December 11, 2000. Wagner shared information about the rehabilitation of this row house.

Telephone conversation between Gail E. Marquart and William C. Page on December 11, 2000. Marquart shared information about the rehabilitation of this row house.

Robert George Harritt, III, meeting with Gail E. Marquart. (No date). Notes recorded on Harritt's business card in the files of Wetherell Ericsson Leusink Architects.

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Henshie-Briggs Row House, Polk County, Iowa.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The East 22 feet of the West 73 feet (except High Street) of Lot 31 of the Official Plat of the S. W. 1/4 of Lot 6 and all of Lot 7, Rose's Addition;

and the East 22 feet of the West 65 feet of Lot 1, in Block 58, Campbell & McMullen's Addition to Fort Des Moines, all now included in and forming a part of the City of Des Moines, Iowa.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Contains all land historically associated with the property.

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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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1106 High Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Looking southeast
William C. Page, Photographer
October 2, 2000

2. Henshie-Briggs Row House
1106 High Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Looking east-southeast
William C. Page, Photographer
October 2, 2000

3. Henshie-Briggs Row House
1106 High Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Looking north
William C. Page, Photographer
October 2, 2000