

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

DEC 27 1982

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Boerner-Fry Company/Davis Hotel

and/or common Davis Hotel Building

2. Location

street & number 322 East Washington St. \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Iowa City \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Iowa code 19 county Johnson code 103

3. Classification

| Category                                        | Ownership                                      | Status                                              | Present Use                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private    | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both                  | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress           | <input type="checkbox"/> educational           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                      | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government            |
|                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered      | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted          | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial            |
|                                                 |                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military              |
|                                                 |                                                |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                |
|                                                 |                                                |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> park                  |
|                                                 |                                                |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence     |
|                                                 |                                                |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> religious             |
|                                                 |                                                |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific            |
|                                                 |                                                |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation        |
|                                                 |                                                |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> other:                |

4. Owner of Property

name Washington Park, Inc.

street & number c/o 834 North Johnson Street

city, town Iowa City \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Iowa 52240

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Johnson County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Iowa City \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Iowa 52240

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Urban Revitalization Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date Spring 1981 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records Planning & Program Development, City of Iowa City,

city, town Iowa City \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Iowa 52240

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Boerner-Fry Company/Davis Hotel Building was, when originally constructed, the northernmost terminus of a narrow industrial corridor that bordered Iowa City's small central business district on its east side, and stretched from Bowery to Washington Street along Gilbert Street. Standing three stories tall with a very narrow twenty-two foot wide front, this imposing brick and stone structure stood for most of its years of service isolated visually, standing between sprawling lumber yards to the east and west. The building is eccentric in its dimensions (22' by 150') and its materials, being built for industrial purposes yet built in a multi-storied and narrow plan which was even in 1900 long out of date.

Most striking is the first floor, built with ashlar limestone (except the west wall which is built of stone rubble) scoured in a herringbone pattern. The mortar lines are projected and colored red to further distinguish the stonework. This carefully created horizontal patterning is violated by the placement of the front door's stone lintel into the brickwork above the top of the stone foundation line. The remaining two stories are of brick, laid in eight course American common bond. The roof slopes gradually to the rear of the building, between slightly raised side parapets with tile coping. Decorative detail is restricted to the narrow facade. Thin plain stone combination lintels and belt courses trace the tops of the second and third story windows. An ornate tin cornice projects from the front parapet. All other windows are individually placed or are paired (west facade) beneath segmental brick arches (composed of two arches of brick laid in rowlock fashion). The original fenestration pattern was vertically symmetrical with first floor penetrations being simple double hung sash. Original sash was 2/2, examples of which survive on the north face of the second floor. The main facade fenestration is unsymmetrical due to the use of an off-center entrance. The original plan allowed for maximal interior light, a factor that aided later conversion for hotel use. On the west face, now concealed behind another building of recent date, three paired window sets penetrated the side wall on the top two floors and were vertically aligned.

The original plan remained unchanged prior to its conversion for hotel use. By 1933, a single story front porch supported by a pair of square corner posts on raised pedestals had been added. The joist marks remain on the main facade. A small garage stood adjacent to the west facade along with a single story side addition on that same side. The former was gone by 1944 and the side wing was demolished more recently. The addition of the side wing caused the construction of a single door in the west rear wall (recently sealed) and the sealing of part of a second floor window pair. A garage door fills the first story rear of the building and probably dates to the factory period of occupancy.

## 8. Significance

| Period                                        | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below   |                                                 |                                                 |                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic    | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture            | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education   | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/<br>humanitarian                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900–                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)<br>pharmacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> invention            |                                                 |                                                 |                                                 |                                                                 |

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**Specific dates** 1867–1933      **Builder/Architect** Jacob J. Hotz, builder.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Boerner-Fry Company/Davis Hotel Building is closely and most significantly associated with the career of Emil Louis Boerner (1852–1933), one of the founders of and the first dean (1885–1904), of the University of Iowa Department of Pharmacy. Emil Boerner is one of a very few individuals who spent most of their lives in Iowa City, and who were able to contribute to both the university and commercial-industrial spheres of city life.

Born in Westphalia, Prussia, Boerner arrived in Iowa City at the age of twelve, graduated with high honors at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy in 1876 and established a drug store in his hometown in that same year which he was to oversee in its operations for fifty-seven years. He was a primary co-organizer of the Iowa Pharmaceutical Association (1880), and a member of the faculty of the first Iowa pharmaceutical school, the newly established Iowa College of Pharmacy in Des Moines during the years 1882–84. The State University of Iowa Department of Pharmacy was established in 1885, largely through his efforts, and Boerner as first dean was responsible for initial curriculum development. Boerner was throughout his career, actively involved with the American Pharmaceutical Association, serving as national chairperson in 1902–03, and as a key member on numerous committees.

The Boerner-Fry Company was established in September of 1897 to produce toilet articles and light pharmaceuticals. Boerner's primary partner, apparently a major investor, was William A. Fry (1845–1916) who was credited with being "one of Johnson County's and Iowa City's foremost citizens" at the time of his death. Fry served as the city assessor, president of the Iowa City Water Company, as president and cashier of the Johnson County Savings Bank for many years, and was identified with other local business interests. W.J. Teeters, vice-president of the firm, was to succeed Boerner as dean of the College of Pharmacy. The firm constructed their new factory in 1899, moving into their new plant on December 20 of that year. Jacob J. Hotz, noted area contractor and builder, was responsible for the construction, one of ten major buildings built by his firm that year alone. The Boerner-Fry Company "earned more than a state-wide reputation for the manufacture of high class products." In 1905 the company incorporated. Vanilla extract was one of its primary products. The importation of oils and spices from around the world resulted in the local creation of exotic odors and images. Their market was national in scope and in 1899 the plant employed twenty-seven hands. In 1915 the firm relocated to the Main factory in East Iowa City, and went out of business following Mr. Fry's death in 1916.

Subsequent uses of the structure were varied and of short duration until in 1922 the building was converted for hotel use and was titled the Washington Hotel. As such, it was managed by owner Hays H. Carson and his wife Lillian through 1940, by Harry and Stella Goodrich through 1949, and by George W. Davis, who in 1952 renamed it the Davis Hotel and continued to operate it until 1972. The building was then sold and converted for office use. As a hotel advertisements boasted that each room had its own window as well as hot and cold running water and a bathroom. The building's location was ideal

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Continuation Sheet, Item #9, page 1.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Iowa City West

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

### UTM References

A 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 5 | 5       | 2 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 4        | 6 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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C 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

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F 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

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|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

East 22' of Lot 8, Block 61, Original Town of Iowa City, that being the land upon which the building stands.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state Iowa code 19 county Johnson code 113

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa SHPO date December 9, 1982

Historical Building

street & number East 12th and Grand Avenue telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature John A. Anderson

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date 24 November 1982

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
Entered in the  
National Register

John Allous Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

date 1/27/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

for advertising and for years the local power company operated a large electric sign on the roof that proclaimed:

LIGHT  
HEAT WITH GAS  
COOK

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET    BIBLIOGRAPHY    ITEM NUMBER 9    PAGE 1

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