

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 13 1988

date entered

MAY 10 1988

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

1. Name

historic Park, David, House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 1501 Birchmont Drive

N/A not for publication

city, town Bemidji

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota

code 22

county Beltrami

code 007

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 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" 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 Mrs. Wanda Park

street & number 1501 Birchmont Drive

city, town Bemidji

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota 56601

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Beltrami County Courthouse, County Recorder's Office

street & number Beltrami Avenue and Sixth Street

city, town Bemidji

state Minnesota 56601

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Beltrami County Historic
title Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date September 1986

federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town St. Paul

state Minnesota

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Park House is a two-story, flat-roofed, white-painted, poured-concrete structure occupying a corner lot on a residential street opposite the Bemidji State University Campus. With its smooth surfaces, flowing lines, and repetitive, geometrical detailing, the building is a classic example of the "Streamline Moderne" variant of the Art Deco architectural style. The building displays a humpbacked, L-shaped plan. The "hump" consists of a small, two-story wing and a one-story, attached garage on the building's rear (west and north) elevations. Extending south and east, the legs of the "L" meet in a concave curve containing the main entrance, which faces the southeast corner of the lot. The inward sweep of the entrance is visually counterbalanced by a semicircular, one-story wing projecting from the tip of the south leg of the "L." The roof of this wing, as well as the roof of the attached garage in the rear, functions as a balcony, with access provided by a single-leaf door in the adjacent second-story wall. The rounded wing also features a band of five, fixed, oversized, single-light windows.

The spread of the L-shaped plan creates a strong horizontal composition, accentuated by the treatment of windows and the use of surface ornamentation. Grouped in twos and threes on both stories, the windows (hung, two-over-two, wood sash) form extended bands with horizontal muntins and heavy meeting rails. These horizontal lines are continued by a series of parallel, ornamental striations encircling all facades. One striation bisects the building into upper and lower levels, while the others connect the window blocks on each story at head, muntin, meeting-rail, and sill levels. The composition is capped by a final horizontal band at roof level, in the form of a continuous, crenated parapet.

Despite the building's pronounced horizontal banding, the various layers do not merely float on top of one another. They are skilfully pulled together into a unified composition by the striking vertical design of the main entrance, which features two, bold, half-round, fluted columns supporting a small, fan-shaped, false balcony. Enclosed by black, wrought-iron, curvilinear railings, the balcony reveals a rounded fascia decorated with scalloped motifs. The two columns frame a single-leaf, wood door glazed with a long, narrow light and surmounted by a pulvinate transom bar and glass-block transom. The vertical line of the door is carried upward into the second story by a long, narrow window that perches above the balcony like a sculpture on a pedestal. Emphasizing the vertical continuity of the design, both the glazed entrance door and the second-story window are covered with identical rectilinear, black, metal grillwork.

The original multi-paned, double hung sash located in the rounded wing, have been removed and replaced by single pane picture windows (fixed sash).

The nomination consists of one contributing building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
..... prehistoric	..... archeology-prehistoric	..... community planning	..... landscape architecture	..... religion
..... 1400-1499	..... archeology-historic	..... conservation	..... law	..... science
..... 1500-1599	..... agriculture	..... economics	..... literature	..... sculpture
..... 1600-1699	XX architecture	..... education	..... military	..... social/
..... 1700-1799	..... art	..... engineering	..... music	..... humanitarian
..... 1800-1899	..... commerce	..... exploration/settlement	..... philosophy	..... theater
XX 1900-	..... communications	..... industry	..... politics:government	..... transportation
		..... invention		..... other (specify)

Specific dates 1936 ~~XXXXX~~ Builder/Architect : Edward K. Mahlum (Broaten and Foss Co.)
 Contractor: Adolph C. Nasvick

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Park House is architecturally significant as one of Minnesota's few, outstanding examples of residential, Streamline Moderne design.

Although Minnesota has its share of well-designed, Art Deco theaters, public buildings, and office blocks, there are few, good, residential examples of either the "Streamline" or "Zigzag" variants of the style. Recent architectural surveys of Minneapolis and St. Paul, for example, have identified only about four noteworthy examples. During the 1920s and 1930s, most Twin Cities architects were firmly wedded to historicism, and, with few exceptions, practitioners in the rest of the state followed their lead. ¹ One exception, however, was Edward K. Mahlum.

Born in Seattle in 1909, Mahlum grew up in Norway, where he developed an interest in "modern" functionalist architecture. Returning to the United States at the age of 18, he enrolled at North Dakota State College in Fargo to pursue an undergraduate degree in architecture. Under the direction of Homer Huntoon, the school's architecture program had just broken with the historic revival tradition, and students were encouraged to look at contemporary American and European design. Mahlum felt at home in the new program. As he explained many years later, "I grew up with modern architecture -- we didn't have American Colonial in Norway." Receiving his B.S. in architecture in 1934, Mahlum briefly worked as a draftsman for the federal government and then, in 1935, joined the architectural firm of Einer Broaten & Magnus O. Foss in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Except for a six-month period spent traveling in Europe, he served as the firm's head designer until the summer of 1938. Encouraged by the two principals to follow his modernist bent, Mahlum designed several Art Deco structures in Minnesota, including the Clearwater County Courthouse in Bagley and the High School Auditorium in Bemidji.²

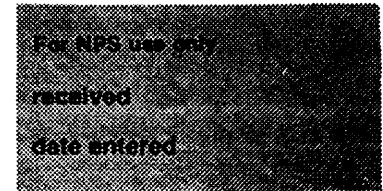
During this period, Mahlum also produced a striking Streamline Moderne house for Bemidji businessman David Park, owner of the city's largest creamery. Completed in 1936, the Park House is a bold, two-story, horizontal composition displaying sweeping reversed curves on the front facade in a classic Streamline Moderne manner. The design's horizontal emphasis is reinforced by banded windows linked by ornamental striations encircling all facades. The main entrance, sheltered in a concave curve of the wall, is framed by stout, half-round, fluted columns supporting a false, fan-shaped balcony with curvilinear, metal railings. Immediately above the balcony is a tall, narrow window, which continues the vertical thrust of the entrance into the second story, effectively integrating the building's horizontal layers into a unified design. It is interesting to note that Mahlum had used a similar, but less dramatic, columned entrance in a two-story, brick, Streamline residence constructed in 1937 for a Fergus Falls physician, Dr. W. A. Lee. In the Park House, however, Mahlum replaced the brick of the earlier building with poured concrete producing a smooth monolithic white surface that accelerates the flowing lines of the building's front facade. ³

The Park House was not the only residential design that Mahlum executed in Bemidji. The building's contractor, Adolph C. Nasvick, was so taken by Mahlum's work that he commissioned Broaten and Foss to design a house for himself on the lot immediately north of the Park House. In the Nasvick House, constructed about 1939, Mahlum abandoned the Streamline idiom for a "boxy"

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Significance con't.

International Style design. Sitting side-by-side, the Park House and the Nasvick House make a unique, modernist statement in a residential district otherwise given over to period revival designs.⁴

In June 1938, Mahlum left Broaten and Foss to accept a position with Clarence H. Johnston, Jr., Architects, one of the largest and most prominent architectural offices in the Twin Cities. Although generally known for its conservative period-revival work, the firm was then completing two Deco-inspired buildings at the Minneapolis Campus of the University of Minnesota: Coffman Student Union and the Bell Museum of Natural History. Mahlum went to work as chief interior designer of both structures, quickly finding that his modernist outlook clashed with the firm's prevailing design principles. When Johnston offered him a partnership in 1940, Mahlum, in his own words, "got a headache" at the thought of accepting. That same year, he moved to Seattle to establish his own practice, leaving behind in the Park House one⁵ of Minnesota's outstanding examples of Streamline Moderne residential architecture.

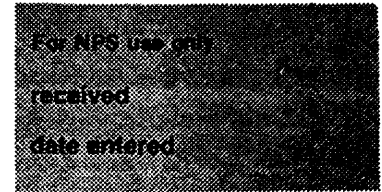
NOTES

1. The St. Paul examples are listed in Patricia A. Murphy and Susan W. Granger, "Historic Sites Survey of Saint Paul and Ramsey County, 1980-1983," unpublished report prepared for Ramsey County Historical Society and Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, 1983, pp. 339-340. For residential Art Deco in Minneapolis, see David Gebhard and Tom Martinson, A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 72. Gebhard and Martinson also note a cluster of three Moderne houses in International Falls (p. 205), and isolated examples in Grand Rapids (p. 202) and Hibbing (p. 204). Unfortunately, there is no historical information on the design and construction of these houses.
2. The discussion of Mahlum's training and career is based on author's telephone interview with Edward K. Mahlum, February 8, 1987, as well as Mahlum's "Application for Associateship" with the American Institute of Architects, April 21, 1939, on file at Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota. Corroborating details concerning Mahlum's work with Broaten and Foss were furnished by the firm's structural engineer during the late 1930s, Charles Budge, in a telephone interview with the author, January 14, 1987. Neither Mahlum nor Budge was able to provide a complete inventory of the firm's projects or precise dates of construction. The date of the Park House was confirmed by David Park's daughter, Mary Morton, in a telephone interview 31 October 1987. Mrs. Park still resides in the house. The Clearwater County Courthouse has been remodeled beyond recognition, but the Auditorium in Bemidji is intact. It displays a curved front with classical columns and a Greek fretwork frieze below the parapet.
3. The Lee House has been locally designated as a historic site by the Fergus Falls Heritage Preservation Commission; see James Gray and Marjorie Barton, Building from the Past (Fergus Falls: Heritage Preservation Commission, 1985), p. 84.

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Significance con't.

NOTES con't.

4. There is one other example of Art Deco residential design in Bemidji: a one-story, flat-roofed, boxy building with glass-block windows and zig-zag linear detailing at 1403 Bemidji Avenue. By an unknown designer, the building lacks the dramatic flair of the Park House.
5. Although the interior of Coffman Union has been completely redone, Mahlum's work on the Bell Museum survives pretty much intact. Gebhard and Martinson characterize the interior as "a tasteful and understanding version of PWA Moderne," calling particular attention to the building's "sculptured relief panels and the metal light standards by the entrance" (p. 51). According to Mahlum, he was responsible for the overall concept of the sculptured work.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Hess, Jeffrey A. Interview with Charles Budge, January 14, 1987.
_____. Interview with Wanda Park, January 14, 1987.
_____. Interview with Edward K. Mahlum, February 8, 1987.

Gebhard, David and Martinson, Tom. A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1977.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Bemidji East Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	3	5	8	6	9	0	5	2	6	0	3	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies city lots 4 and 5 in Block 1, College Addition. The boundary includes the entire city lots which have been historically associated with the property.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey A. Hess

organization Jeffrey A. Hess, Historical Consultant

date February 13, 1987

street & number 305 Grain Exchange Building

telephone (612) 338-1987

city or town Minneapolis

state Minnesota 55415

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

Nina M. Archabal

title Nina M. Archabal

State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4/4/88

For NPS use only

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

Shelores Byers

Entered in the
National Register

date 5-16-88

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration