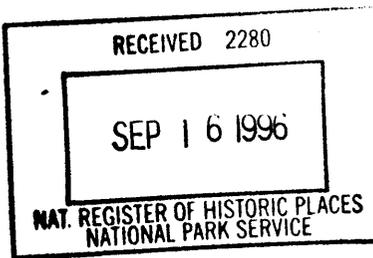


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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 BATES PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 4th Street between Orchard Street and Clark Street N/A not for publication

city or town Des Moines N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50314

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (X 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 (X meets _ does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant (_ nationally _ statewide X locally). See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Patricia Christen DSTHO 9-12-96
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 R. Beall Signature of Keeper Date of Action 10-25-96

Entered in the
National Register

Bates Park Historic District
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
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.)

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

- buildings(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 16 | 6 | buildings |
| 1 | 0 | sites |
| | 0 | structures |
| | 0 | objects |
| 17 | 6 | 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
RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Colonial Revival

foundation BRICK
walls WOOD

roof ASPHALT
other GLASS

Narrative Description

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

Bates Park Historic District
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)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1883-circa 1920

Significant Dates

1883

1892

1900

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

William Newton, builder

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

Des Moines Parks & Recreation Department

Bates Park Historic District
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 13 acres +/-

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 15 | 448040 | 4606000 | 1

Zone Easting Northing

2 | 15 | 448040 | 4605880 | 1

Zone Easting Northing

3 | 15 | 448100 | 4605820 | 1

Zone Easting Northing

4 | 15 | 448100 | 4605820 | 1

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William C. Page, Public Historian

organization River Bend Neighborhood Association date March 31, 1995

street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue (Page) telephone 515-243-5740 (Page)

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50313

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 Various (see attached list)

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Bates Park Historic District comprises a portion of Bates Addition, a large and irregularly platted tract of land in North Des Moines, now forming a part of the present day River Bend neighborhood. Except for a public park, which forms its focus, the district is exclusively residential.

This Bates Park Historic District consists of a total of 23 resources, 17 of which are contributing, and six of which are noncontributing. Bates Park, the public parkland, is a site and counted as one contributing resource. There are 16 single-family dwellings adjacent to this park, which are counted as buildings, 14 of which are contributing resources, and two of which are noncontributing resources. There are also six ancillary buildings situated at the rear of the single-family dwellings, two of which are contributing, and four of which are noncontributing.

The Bates Park Historic District is located two blocks east of 6th Avenue and two blocks west of 2nd Avenue. These avenues are four-lane arteries into downtown Des Moines from the north. Although the historic district is situated on a plateau, land to the east falls abruptly off into the floodplain of the Des Moines River, whose flow is situated about one-half mile from the historic district. The floodplain itself stretches all the way to 2nd Avenue. Land to the west of the historic district rises gently to 6th Avenue. The Bates Park Historic District and the surrounding area was built up as residential in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. It is presently classified as "slum-blight" by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

RESOURCES

Public Park

Bates Park--the public parkland--consists of land elements and a panoramic view of the Des Moines River valley.

LAND ELEMENTS

The park is situated on generally level land along a broad slope between 6th Avenue and the floodplain of the Des Moines River. Public thoroughfares provide hard edges on three sides (Clark Street on the north, 4th Street on the west, and Goode Street on the south). Heavy vegetation and an over-story canopy of trees provide an edge to the park on the east. The parkland itself is a grassy area. Although the park has a few modern improvements, such as a concrete block pavilion, wading pool, chain link fence, baseball backstop, and playground equipment, the overall visual impression of the park is that of open space. The boundaries of the park have changed over the years (see Continuation Sheets 7-12 and 7-13). Several additional city lots were added to the park between 1901 and 1920.

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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

PANORAMIC VIEW

An intrinsic part of this parkland is the panoramic view it offers of the Des Moines River valley. When vegetation in the park is not in foliage, one can see across the valley to residences in the Capitol Park neighborhood, institutional buildings on Des Moines' east side, and the Iowa State Capitol Building on Capitol Hill.

Single-Family Dwellings

There are 16 single-family dwellings within the Bates Park Historic District. All of the residences are of balloon frame construction and possess either one- or two-stories. The lots on which they stand are generally 50' x 125' in size. The street setbacks of these houses is uniform on both sides of 4th Street.

Of these 16 dwellings, 14 are contributing and two are noncontributing.

These dwellings are of the following architectural types:

ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGY

Probable Architect-Designed
American Four Square
Other

The probable architect-designed types are situated mostly on the west side of 4th Street. The American Four Squares are mostly of popular architectural design. They are situated on the east side of 4th Street and on the north side of Orchard Street, with an additional two located on the west side of 4th Street directly north of Orchard. One dwelling influenced by Craftsman styling stands at 1458 4th Street, and one modern residence stands at 1440 4th Street. These two dwellings are classified as "Other" and are evaluated as noncontributing, because their construction postdates the district's period of significance.

PROBABLE ARCHITECT-DESIGNED

Six single-family dwellings are thought to be architect-designed. Although no specific architect has yet been identified for them, they are associated by style, scale, and building materials to similar single-family dwellings in the River Bend neighborhood, which are the documented work of George E. Hallett, Des Moines architect (Page and Walroth:I E53-E55), and Oliver O. Smith, another contemporary Des Moines architect (*Ibid.*:E51-E52). As such, these buildings might be the design of one of these men.

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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

These houses include the following:

PROBABLE ARCHITECT-DESIGNED

1441 4th St.
1448 4th St.
1452 4th St.
1456 4th St.
1458 4th St.
1464 4th St.

Each of these dwellings is influenced by Colonial Revival architecture. Diagnostic characteristics of this influence (and illustrative examples in the historic district) are listed below:

GAMBREL ROOF

1441 4th St.
1456 4th St.
1464 4th St.

LATTICE-WORKED FENESTRATION

1452 4th St.

FRONT PORCH INSET UNDER MAIN ROOF

1448 4th St.
1452 4th St.
1456 4th St.
1464 4th St.

SYMMETRICAL DORMER WINDOWS

1448 4th St. (facade)
1452 4th St. (facade)
1456 4th St. (south and north elevations)
1464 4th St. (facade)

AMERICAN FOUR SQUARE

Nine examples of American Four Square designs are located within the district.

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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

Two of these dwellings possess standard American Four Square characteristics. They include the following examples:

1468 4th St.
1429 4th St.

Each of these residences features a flared hip roof over the main block and a flared hip roof over the facade dormer window. The front porches on these examples are supported by classical-inspired wood columns, exhibiting a Colonial Revival stylistic influence. The house at 1468 also possesses a lattice-worked fenestration, another characteristic of that mode.

Seven single-family dwellings exhibit an American Four Square design reduced to its basic elements. They include the following examples:

1429 4th St.
1435 4th St.
1437 4th St.
1439 4th St.

1430 4th St.
1434 4th St.

413 Orchard St.

The basic elements of these houses include a 2-story configuration, rectangular footprint (narrow side as facade), hip roof, and full-width front porch. None of these buildings possesses a facade dormer window, a standard element of the American Four Square design. The overall footprint of these houses is also somewhat smaller than the two standard examples listed above. In spite of the modest architectural pretension of these houses, each possesses a flared roof as a decorative touch.

OTHER

There are two exceptions to this architectural typology of Bates Park Historic District, both single-family dwellings. Although they were constructed after the period of significance for this nomination and are counted as noncontributing, each is compatible in scale, building materials, and function with the other single-family dwellings in it.

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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

One of these exceptions is the house at 1458 4th Street, which features Craftsman-influenced styling. This one-story single-family dwelling was constructed circa 1924 and stands as in-fill housing within the historic district, having been erected at a later time than its neighbors.

The other exception is the house located at 1440 4th Street. This 1-1/2 story single-family dwelling was constructed in 1995 as in-fill housing on a vacant lot. Designed by Des Moines architect Ben Allers, AIA, this building was built for the Public Housing Authority of Des Moines to be compatible with historic architecture in the district. It achieves this end through complimentary scale, building materials, roof configuration, and street setback to the historic fabric of the area.

Ancillaries

The Bates Park Historic District possesses six ancillary buildings. All of are of balloon frame construction and one-story in height. These ancillary buildings are located adjacent to alleys at the rear of the single-family dwellings.

The ancillaries are of two architectural types: stables and garages. The stables are slightly larger in size than the garages and were intended to house horses and perhaps carriages. They could also be called barns. "Stable" is used here as a descriptive term because historic Sanborn Fire Insurance maps employ that word for them. The garages are similar in size and shape with the stables but are of slightly later construction.

ANCILLARIES

| | |
|--------------|--------|
| 1452 4th St. | Garage |
| 1456 4th St. | Garage |
| 1458 4th St. | Garage |
| 1464 4th St. | Stable |
| 1468 4th St. | Stable |
| 1437 4th St. | Garage |

INTEGRITY

The integrity of the Bates Park Historic District is good. Although most of the open front porches on the houses have now been enclosed, none has been removed from the building. All but one of these remodelings (1430 4th Street) appear to be reversible. The overall condition of these buildings is fair. Many need some form of maintenance. In spite of the "slum blight" designation of this neighborhood, the structural integrity of these buildings is intact.

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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

The ancillaries possess good integrity. Stables are a fragile resource because of their wood construction and the fact that they are frequently replaced by more up-to-date garages. The Bates Park Historic District is fortunate to possess two intact stables. All of the remaining four ancillaries in the historic district are garages. Because their construction postdates the period of significance for the district, they are counted as noncontributing. Because they stand at the rear of the properties, they are not visually intrusive. Additionally, the age of these garages--most dating prior to World War II--places them near in age to the period of significance for the historic district.

HISTORY OF USE

The Des Moines River valley vista offered by Bates Park historically comprises one of its chief assets. In a 1906 description of a "twenty mile boulevard" connecting municipal parks in Des Moines, for example, Bates Park is described as:

En route to the Des Moines river [from downtown via West 9th Street] a trifling detour reveals the charms of Bates park, a nicely located tract of ground bounded by Fourth and Clark streets and Arlington avenue, and containing about three acres. It lies on a plateau some fifty feet above the bottoms of the Des Moines river and about one-half mile away, affording a fine view of the surrounding country. (*Register and Leader*, December 16, 1906. "Des Moines A City of Parks")

Another of the park's charms is its unexpected location. Tucked away from primary streets and deep within a residential section of the city, the uninitiated "stumbles" upon this resource as a surprise. As the above newspaper article indicates, this phenomenon has historical precedent, with its reference to "a trifling detour reveals" suggesting the discovery of something unknown.

Although Bates Park, the parkland, is small in size, it has historically offered an open public space within an area which was intensely built-up. As one resident recalled:

We had Bates Park, which we still have. It is the only park I think in the old original North Des Moines which is still in existence down at 4th and Clark. I've got a couple of memories of that that I won't repeat. (Parnham:7)

RESOURCE COUNT

The following inventory lists resources within the Bates Park Historic District by address and classifies them as contributing or noncontributing resources to it. All resources within the historic district are classified as buildings except Bates Park (the public park), which is classified as a site.

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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Under "Applicable National Register Criteria" below, "C" indicates a resource is contributing and "N" is noncontributing to the district under the criterion listed.

| Address | Resource Name | Construction Date | Applicable N. R. Criteria | |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| | | | Criterion A | Criterion C |
| 4TH STREET WEST SIDE | | | | |
| 1430 | House, American Four Square, 2-story, frame, flared hipped roof | c. 1903 | C | C |
| 1434 | House, American Four Square, 2-story, frame, flared hipped roof | c. 1903 | C | C |
| 1440 | House, Modern | 1995 | N | N |
| 1444 | House, 1-1/2 story, Colonial Revival | 1905 | C | C |
| 1448 | House, Colonial Revival | 1901 | C | C |
| 1452 | House, Colonial Revival Garage, Modern | 1905 c. 1950 | C N | C N |
| 1456 | House, Colonial Revival Garage, Exposed rafters, narrow siding | c. 1901 c. 1924 | C N | C N |
| 1458 | House, Craftsman Garage, Exposed rafters | c. 1920 c. 1920 | N N | N N |
| 1464 | House, Colonial Revival Stable, Wide vertical board siding | c. 1898 c. 1898 | C C | C C |
| 1468 | House, Colonial Revival American Four Square Stable, Flared Roof | c. 1902 c. 1902 | C C | C C |

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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

4TH STREET EAST SIDE

| | | | | |
|------|---|---------|---|---|
| 1429 | House, American Four Square, 2-story, frame, flared hipped roof with dormer, larger size house | 1901 | C | C |
| 1435 | House, American Four Square, 2-story, frame, flared hipped roof | 1904 | C | C |
| 1437 | House, American Four Square, 2-story, frame, flared hipped roof | c. 1904 | C | C |
| | Garage, compatible hip roof with house | c. 1930 | N | N |
| 1439 | House, American Four Square, 2-story, frame, flared hipped roof | c. 1904 | C | C |
| 1441 | House, Colonial Revival, 1-1/2 story, gambrel roof, Inselbrick siding | c. 1904 | C | C |
| | Bates Park (the public park) | | C | C |

ORCHARD AVENUE NORTH SIDE

| | | | | |
|-----|--|---------|---|---|
| 413 | House, American Four Square, 2-story, frame, flared hipped roof | c. 1903 | C | C |
|-----|--|---------|---|---|

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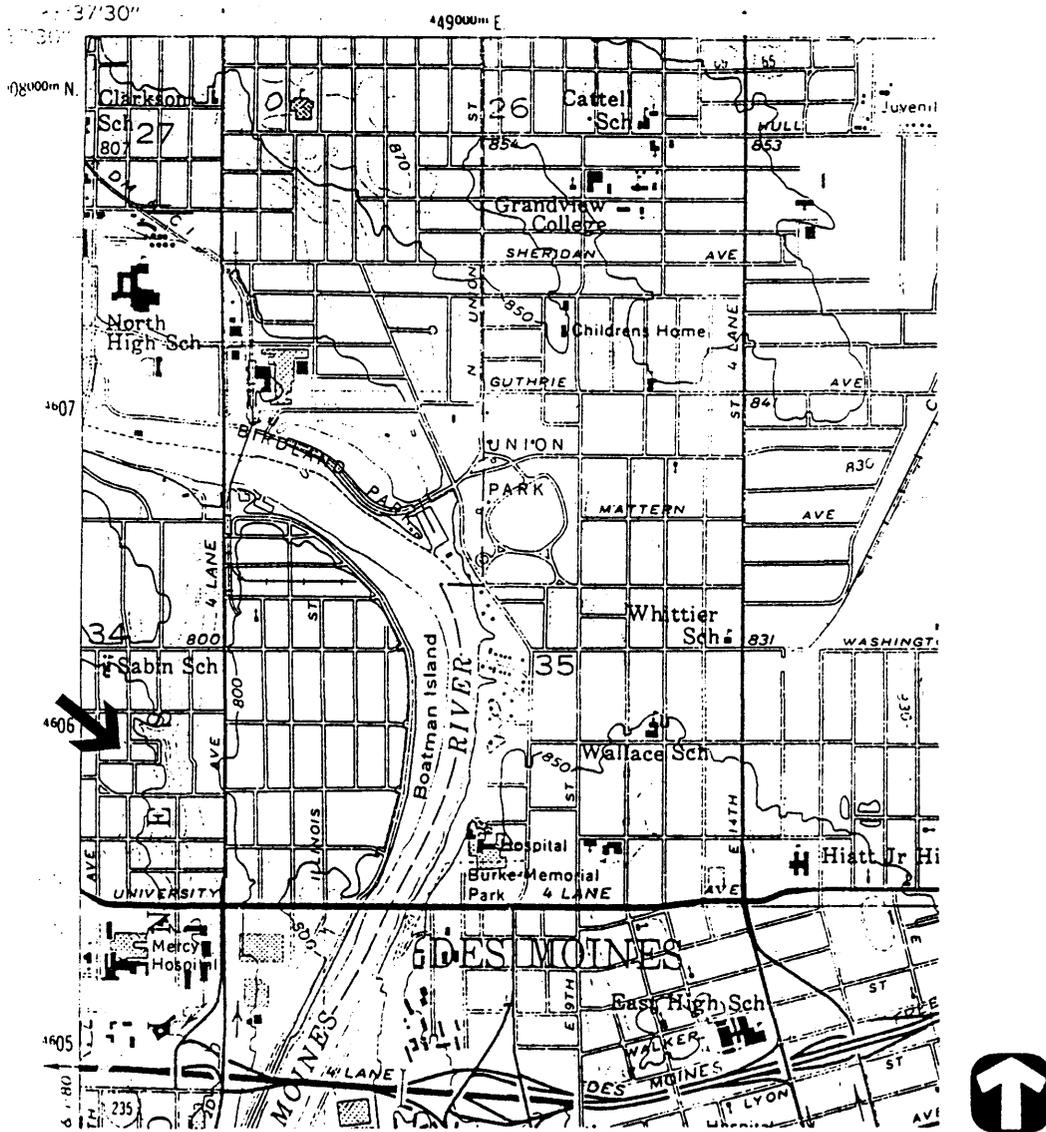
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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

SITE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



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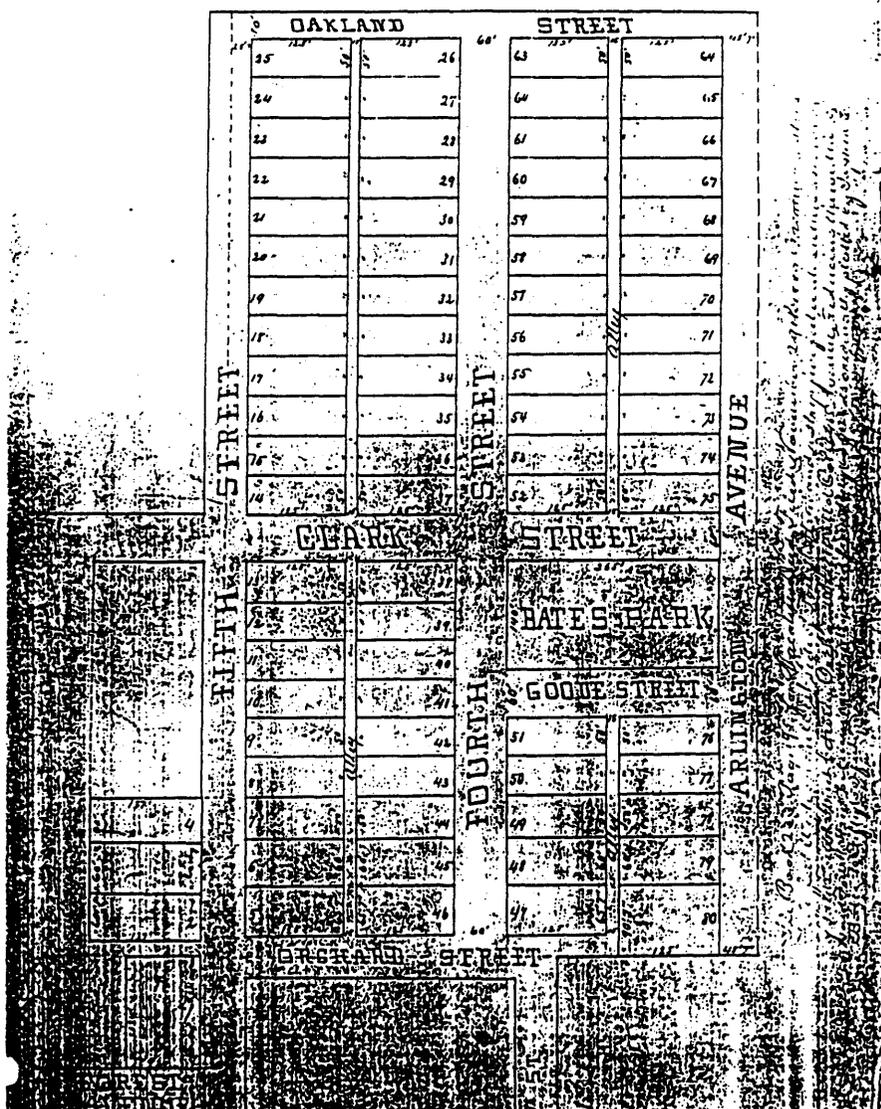
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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

BATES ADDITION

ORIGINAL PLAT



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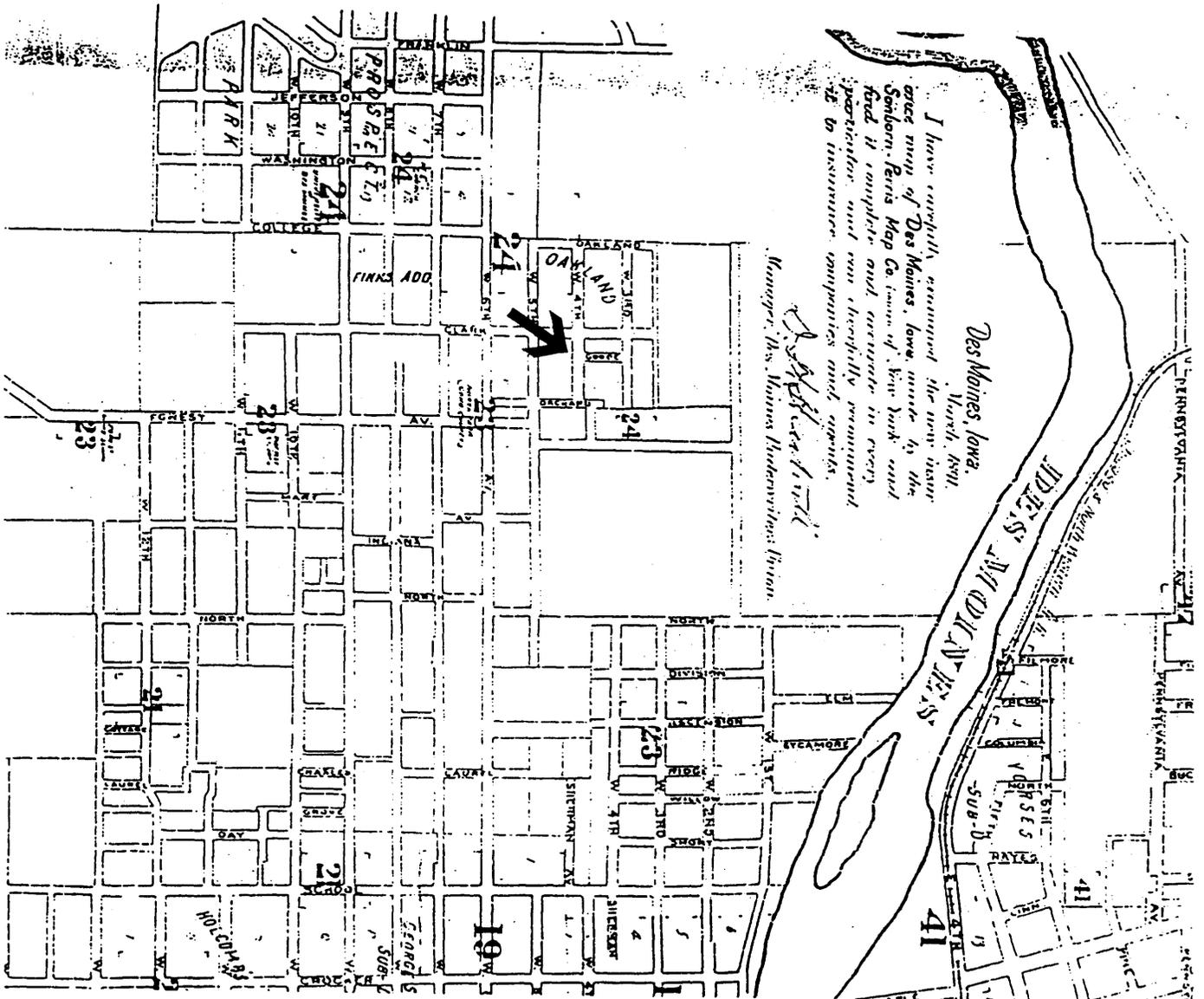
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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

1891 SANBORN MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1891.



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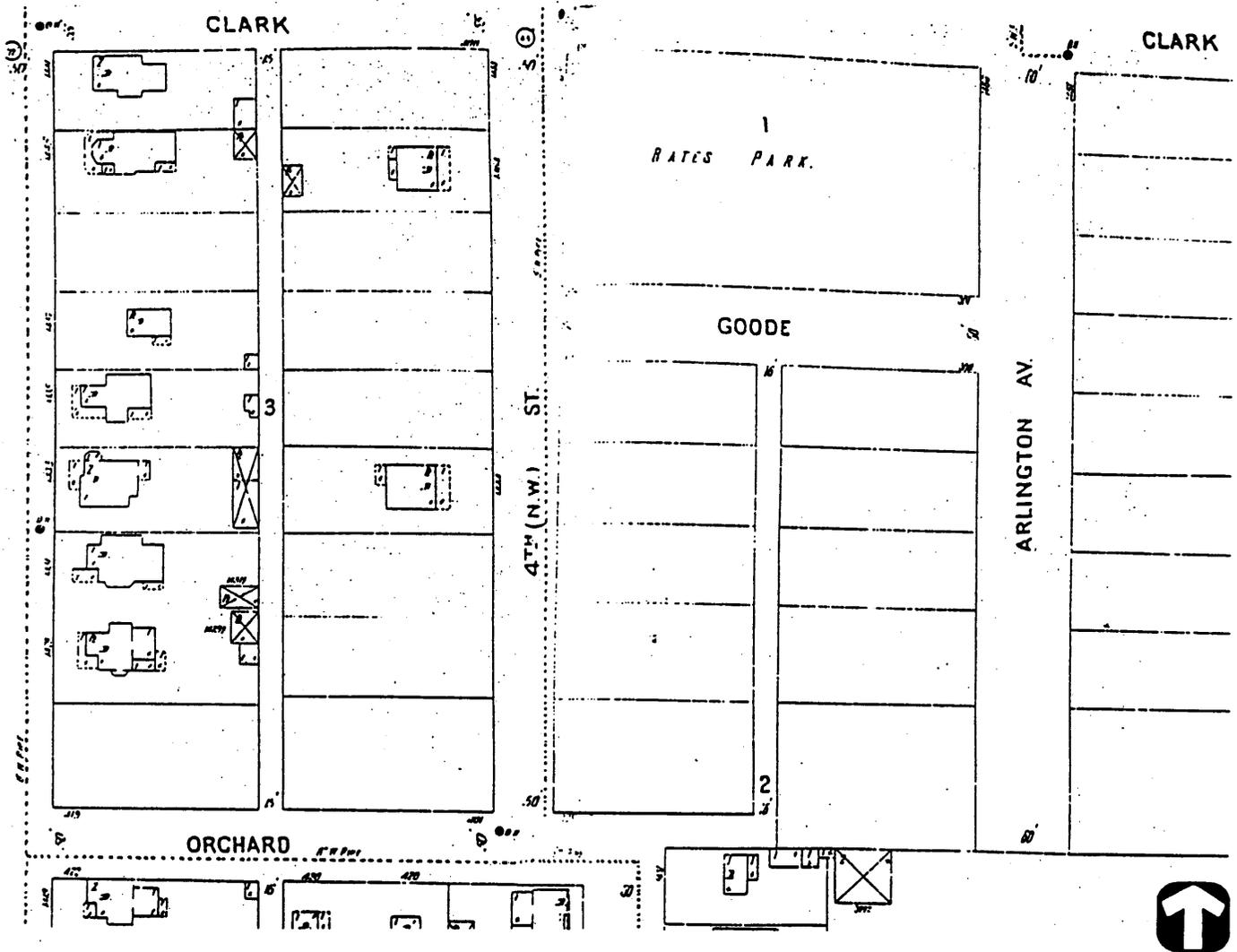
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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

1901 SANBORN MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



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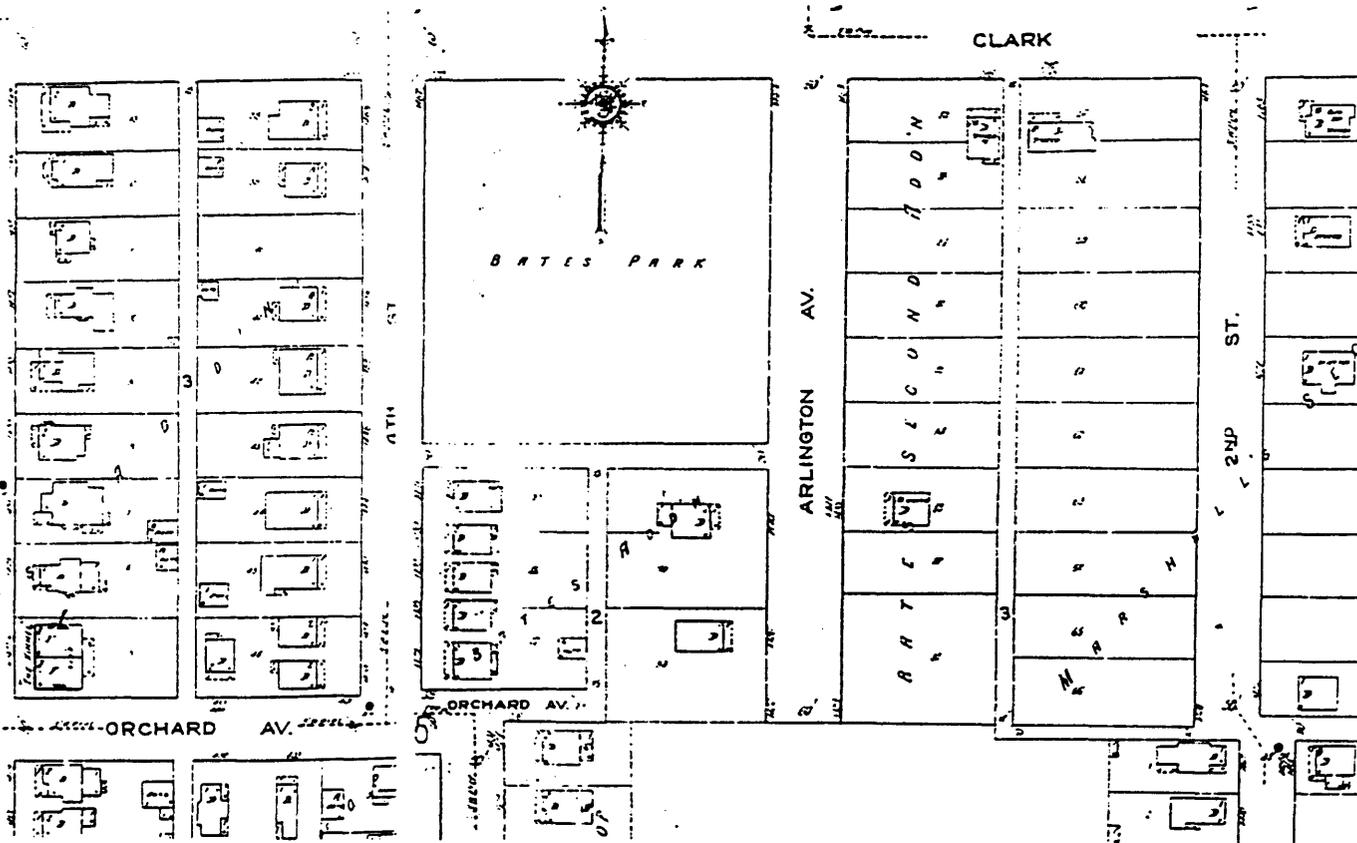
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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

1920 SANBORN MAP



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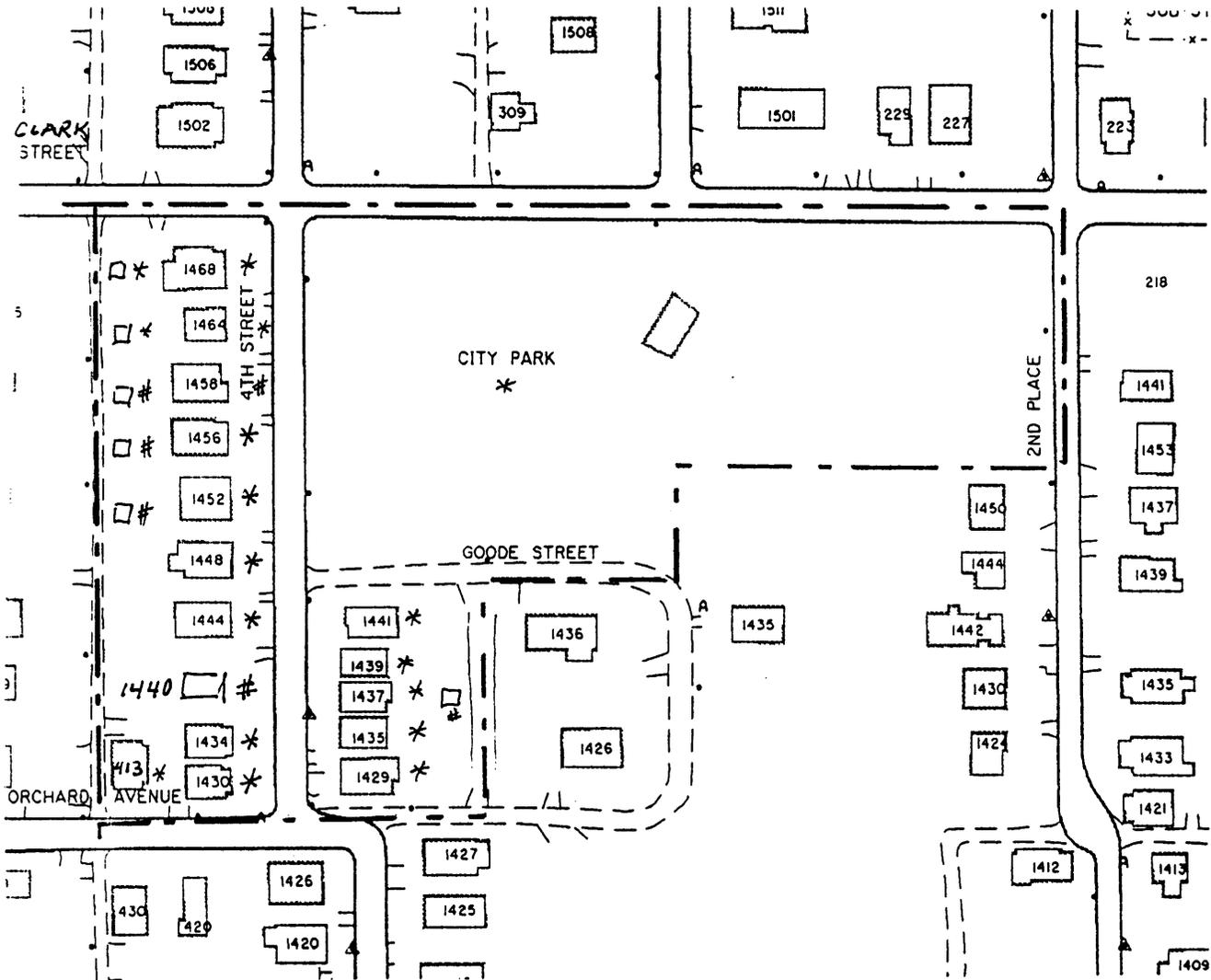
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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

BATES PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES



An asterisk (*) indicates a contributing Resource. A pound sign (#) indicates a noncontributing resource.

Source: City of Des Moines Engineering Department.

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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bates Park Historic District is significant, under National Register Criterion A, for two reasons. First, its development calls attention to the lure of suburban living that North Des Moines exerted over a broad spectrum of residents in the metropolitan area during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. The district possesses a picturesque view of the Des Moines River valley, as well as being adjacent to parkland, two important amenities of suburban living. The second reason for the district's significance, under Criterion A, is that it illustrates the range of socio-economic classes lured by these amenities and how real estate developers exploited their appeal. The Bates Park Historic District contains both moderately expensive and moderately inexpensive single-family dwellings. This juxtaposition illustrates the jowl-to-cheek intermingling of socio-economic classes characteristic of North Des Moines during the late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. In this sense, the Bates Park Historic District is significant as a microcosm of community development in North Des Moines. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of these different property types illustrates how real estate developers intentionally exploited the suburban amenities mentioned above. While the more expensive houses look out over the parkland and picturesque river valley view, the more modest dwellings cluster south of the parkland, face one another, and lack that panorama.

Bates Park Historic District is also significant under National Register Criterion C. A series of residences influenced by Colonial Revival design in the district calls attention to one of the most popular architectural tastes in North Des Moines during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. George E. Hallett, architect and real estate developer of Des Moines, or, possibly Oliver O. Smith, another contemporary architect in North Des Moines, may have designed them. The district also possesses a series of American Four Square houses, whose designs are reduced to the essentials of that residential type. The clustering of these dwellings in the Bates Park Historic District comprises the largest concentration of that type in the River Bend neighborhood. Bates Park Historic District is additionally significant under Criterion C because it calls attention to William Newton, contractor-builder, and Nelson Royal, mortgage broker, both of Des Moines. Working together, these individuals erected at least eight speculative houses in the district. Their activity provides evidence of how contractor-builders in Des Moines contributed to the city's residential growth.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The evolution of Bates Park--both the public parkland and the platted city lots--shows how complex real estate development in North Des Moines could be. This portion of the nomination discusses the history of that tract of land prior to its residential development.

Curtis Bates (d. 1879) was a pioneer Des Moines lawyer and journalist. In 1854 the Democratic State Convention nominated him as Governor of Iowa. Bates lost that election to James Grimes, the Republican candidate. Bates also sought unsuccessfully to become judge of the District Court in Central Iowa. He subsequently disposed of his interest in a local Des Moines newspaper and retired from his law practice, devoting his time thereafter to managing his extensive real estate interests. (Andrews:I-426.)

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Bates Park Historic District, Polk County, Iowa.

In 1860 Bates purchased a large tract of land north of Des Moines that subsequently became a portion of Bates Addition. This tract included:

land lying south of Clark Street to Oakland Avenue, between Arlington Avenue and Fourth Street. (*Ibid.*)

For many years this tract of land remained unimproved. Bates neither platted nor sold parcels of it during his lifetime. Bates lived until 1879.

A variety of factors contributed to this tract's subsequent development. These factors included its picturesque situation, traditions of its use by the public, the philanthropy of the Bates family in giving part of the land to the public as a park, real estate speculation, and laissez faire practices. More information about this chapter in the tract's history will be found in the "Suburban Development" section below.

Public Acquisition of the Parkland

The public acquisition of Bates Park (the public parkland) illustrates the difficulties surrounding public acquisition of parklands in Des Moines during the Victorian era. It required 17 years before this tract of land--traditionally used as such for an even longer period by the public--came into public ownership.

During Judge Bates' lifetime, the tract of land now known as Bates Park Addition remained unplatted, but

the public by common accord used the northern portion along the bluff overlooking the river valley as a park and it was known as Bates Park, the Judge interposing no objection. (Andrews:I-426.)

Following the death of Judge Bates, Sophia E. Bates, his widow, took steps to develop the tract. In 1883, for example, she had the entire tract platted as Bates Addition. At this time, Mrs. Bates also designated a tract measuring 140' x 265' as a public park, "in accordance with the evident intent of the Judge." According to a local historian, she also conveyed the title to this tract to the Board of Park Commissioners, instructing that it be named Bates Park in commemoration of her husband. (*Ibid.*, p. 427.)

Prior to the 1890s, boards of park commissioners were not enabled under Iowa law to hold title to real estate. Perhaps this is the reason Bates Park did not become public property. Such appears to be the case, for, in 1892 when the Park Board solicited proposals from landowners to buy land for parks, Mrs. Bates offered to sell Bates Park to the City. (*Iowa State Register*, July 6, 1892.) The Park

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Board, however, declined to purchase it at that time, opting instead to buy land that became such parks as Greenwood and Union.

Finally, in 1900 Mrs. Bates donated and the City accepted six city lots at the park site. The city also purchased four lots to the south, Numbers 50, 51, 76, and 77. (The private sector subsequently acquired the latter four lots from the City, and they were developed for residential purposes.)

On August 14, 1900, the North Des Moines Improvement Association celebrated the opening of Bates Park. The program included an address by Sophia E. Bates, a band concert, and fireworks. This celebration culminated 17 years of effort to acquire the property for the public. In his self-important way, Johnson Brigham, Iowa State Librarian and resident of North Des Moines, characterized this event as "one of the minor events in the history of the public parks in Des Moines." (Vol. 1, p.369.)

In conclusion, the history of Bates Park provides evidence about the complexity surrounding park acquisitions in Des Moines during the Victorian era. Enabling legislation was required before boards of park commissioners could hold title to real estate in Iowa. Prior to this, even the gift of Bates Park to the public was prohibited. Additional legislation was also required for park boards to levy taxes for park acquisitions. When such legislation was enacted, the City of Des Moines launched a major program of park acquisition, but selection criteria placed other tracts in more favorable lights than the Bates tract. Sophia E. Bates must have suffered mixed emotions during this period. Her offer to sell the land to the City in 1892 is understandable because the City was soliciting proposals for purchase at that time. Although the city declined to purchase this tract for understandable reasons, her subsequent gift, eight years later, and the City's acceptance of it, witnesses to Bates' enduring sense of civic goodwill.

Park Improvements

Some improvements had already taken place in Bates Park prior to its acquisition as a public park. In 1892, for example, a newspaper reported that:

Mr. B. F. Holcomb, secretary of Bates' Addition Improvement company, submitted [to the Des Moines park commissioners] a plat of Bates' addition, showing the location of Bates' Park, a tract of ground 160 x 200 feet. This small park, he explained, has already been fixed up at some considerable expense and made attractive by an enclosure of a red-rock stone wall with entrances, by the laying out of walks, flower beds, etc., and was called Bates Park in memory of Judge Bates, deceased. While the tract is large enough, Mr. Holcomb said, for the pleasure and convenience of the immediate neighborhood where children and others could breathe the fresh air and indulge in health-giving pastimes to their heart's content, it is hardly large enough for public purposes. Mr. Holcomb offered to sell the nineteen lots immediately adjoining this park on the east and south for the sum \$16,000. With this additional ground and the vacation of Arlington avenue from Clark to Orchard streets, about ten acres of charming ground could be obtained at an expense of only \$16,000 to the city. Mr. Holcomb also explained that three of these lots

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were sold last fall to homeseekers for \$600 apiece, but that the purchasers would take other lots in case this purchase is made by the city. (*Iowa State Register*, July 6, 1892.)

According to the official publication of 1905, Bates Park:

lies on a plateau some fifty feet above the bottoms of the Des Moines River and about one-half mile away, affording a fine view of the surrounding country. It is well kept, and during the coming season will be planted and completed. ("Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners," p. 32.)

The status of Bates Park remained, however, very much the same because, three years later, the city reported that it

has had very little money expended upon it, but in its natural beauty it is an ornament much prized by the citizens of the neighborhood. On this park it has been contemplated by the old Board, that an artesian well be drilled to furnish living water for the ravine, and pretty falls can be arranged to increase the enchanting interest in the place. Beautiful elms fill the little ravine. ("Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners," p. 46.)

If the plans for the artesian well and water falls were implemented, they are no longer extant today. Unfortunately, the Elm trees which matured on the site were destroyed by Dutch Elm disease in the 1960s.

Over the years, improvements have been made to Bates Park. A pavilion, wading pool, and playground equipment, for example, have been constructed on the site. In general, however, the picturesque view of the Des Moines River valley forms the chief charm of this public park today as it did in the Nineteenth Century.

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Bates Park Historic District provides a good example of suburban development in North Des Moines during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

In 1883 Sophia E. Bates, widow of Judge Curtis Bates and owner of the tract of land he had bought in 1860, platted land as a suburban residential section of the City of North Des Moines and named it Bates Addition. This subdivision comprised approximately four city blocks located between Arlington Avenue (now 3rd Street), Oakland Street (later changed to State Street and now known as College Avenue), Orchard Street, and 5th Street. At the time of platting, provisions were made for a public park, a 140' x 265' parcel, to be located on the eastern edge of the plat.

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The Bates Addition plat calls attention to laissez faire practices in Victorian real estate development. It can readily be seen from the plat's design that its layout lacked conformity with adjacent plats already established (see Continuation Sheet 7-10). For example, Orchard Street between 4th and 5th Street was wider to the west of 4th Street than to the east. Greater irregularity occurred because 4th Street jogged 60' at Orchard Street. Although horse drawn vehicles might have navigated such jogs with minor difficulty, motor driven vehicles require a great turning radius, so that such irregularities pose serious questions. In any event, the lack of Bates Addition plat's conformity with established plats (which themselves probably lacked conformity with earlier ones) shows how private developers could operate in the late Nineteenth Century prior to the advent of municipal regulations.

The improvement of Bates Addition required a considerable period of time. Although the construction of houses respected a uniform setback from the street, this construction was neither uniform in terms of architectural style nor size of building. By circa 1920, however, most construction had ceased in the area, and most lots were improved with structures of some kind.

Into the 1890s, the area surrounding the parkland on the west and south was unimproved. Sometime in the mid-1890s, a series of six houses, located on lots 38 through 43, in Bates Addition to the City of Des Moines, were erected directly west of the park. Exhibiting architect-design characteristics, these houses show the influence of Colonial Revival and Classical Revival tastes. They can be considered solid middle-class houses in respect to their cost and appeal.

About the same time, a series of much more simple houses was erected south of the park. These buildings, which are American Four Square in concept, feature flared hipped roofs. Each of these houses is virtually the same, although one on a corner lot is larger in size and somewhat richer in architectural detail. This series of buildings was erected by William Newton, Des Moines contractor-builder, who was financed in this undertaking by Nelson Royal. These houses can be considered middle- to lower-middle class in cost and appeal, and they are noticeably more restrained in architectural concept and detail than their neighbors directly to the north in the Bates Park Historic District.

Continuation Sheet 8-23 of this nomination shows a 1918 newspaper advertisement for real estate near Bates Park. Although the lots offered for sale are outside the Bates Park Historic District, this map provides important information. Prices for city lots are, for example, higher for lots closer to the streetcar line--an indication of the importance of public transportation for homeowners. This map also pictures Bates Park (the public parkland). Here the park is shown landscaped in a formal manner with pedestrian walks, central feature, and symmetrical planting of trees. While these improvements may have been planned for Bates Park, they were not implemented.

ARCHITECTURE

The Bates Park Historic District possesses a representative collection of single-family dwellings influenced by Colonial Revival and American Four Square designs.

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Taken as a whole, the Colonial Revival properties stand as representative examples of middle-class housing influenced by that taste in North Des Moines. They share many architectural elements and details in common. Roof design dominates each of these buildings. While some feature side-gables, other houses feature facade gables. In each instance, however, the roof is steeply pitched. This characteristic gives the buildings a feeling of architectural substance. Other shared characteristics include the use of clapboard and shingle siding, full-width facade porches (often located under the main roof), and extensive employment of dormer windows. In summary, each house possesses a moderate level of architectural detailing and is of moderate size--hallmarks of middle-class housing in North Des Moines during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

The houses influenced by American Four Square styling in the Bates Park Historic District are generally quite restrained in their architectural detailing. Among these nine examples, seven exhibit the American Four Square format reduced to its basic elements--rectangular footprint, two story height, hip roof, and full-width front porch. While other examples of these basic American Four Square designs are scattered throughout North Des Moines, these seven houses form the largest cluster of them in the community. The remaining two American Four Square in the historic district (1429 and 1468 4th Street) possess some Colonial Revival embellishments. In summary, most of these houses possess little architectural detailing--one hallmark of lower middle-class housing in North Des Moines during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

CONTRACTOR-BUILDER CONTRIBUTIONS

Small-scale residential development is hard to identify and document, and yet it was the primary force behind most residential construction in Des Moines between about 1880 and 1941. In this respect, the role of William Newton, contractor-builder, and Nelson Royal, mortgage broker, both of Des Moines, provides a significant case study of this phenomenon during the early Twentieth Century.

William Newton was a contractor-builder in Des Moines. Little is presently known about his life. City directories indicate that Newton was a carpenter by occupation. Records in the Polk County Recorder's Office show that he held title to a series of city lots on 4th Street during the first decade of the Twentieth Century. These records also show that Newton sold these properties in succession over a period of several years and at considerably higher prices than he paid for them. It can be assumed from this information that Newton improved these city lots with the construction of those single-family dwellings, which presently stand on those lots and date from those years. These include the following dwellings in the Bates Park Historic District:

NEWTON CONSTRUCTED DWELLINGS

| <u>Address</u> | <u>Year Built</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1429 4th St. | 1901 |
| 1434 4th St. | 1903 |
| 1435 4th St. | 1904 |
| 1440 4th St. (nonextant) | 1903 |

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NEWTON CONSTRUCTED DWELLINGS (continued)

| <u>Address</u> | <u>Year Built</u> |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1444 4th St. | 1905 |
| 1448 4th St. | 1901 |
| 1448 4th St. | 1901 |
| 1452 4th St. | 1905 |
| 1456 4th St. | 1901 |

Newton was assisted in this construction of speculative housing by Nelson Royal, mortgage broker of Des Moines. Trained by profession as a lawyer, Royal concentrated much of his work in real estate (Lewis A. Royal Interview). Later in his career, Royal was president of the Western Securities Corporation of Des Moines. During the period under discussion, Royal financed Newton in that contractor-builder's real estate development. This is shown by a series of title transfers for each of the properties listed above. In them, Newton transferred ownership to Royal, who shortly thereafter transferred title to the party who became homeowner (Polk County Recorder's Office).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As more is learned about architects, contractor-builders, financiers, and their roles in the development of North Des Moines, this information should be used to supplement this nomination's evaluation of the resources within the Bates Park Historic District.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT

JUDGE CURTIS BATES



JUDGE CURTIS BATES

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ADVERTISEMENT FOR BATES 2ND ADDITION
(SOUTH HALF)

1909

Opening Sale of Bates Park Lots

An Unusual Opportunity to Secure the Only Close-In Residence Lots in Des Moines.
15 Minutes Walk from downtown. Right between 2 Good car lines. \$1 per week payments

COLLEGE AVE.

SABIN SCHOOL

CLARK STREET

ARLINGTON AVE.

30 SECOND STREET

These Bates Park Lots offer you the only chance remaining to secure close in real estate at these low prices and easy payments. These lots are ideally located between the Sixth Ave. and Urbandale car lines and close to North-High school and Sabin school.

All lots are within 15 minutes walking distance of the heart of the city. Lots within a block of this section sell at \$1,200 to \$1,500 each. These lots will increase 25 per cent in value in the next year. The new North Street bridge when completed will double their value.

All large sized lots. Best located in Des Moines.

2 BLKS TO URBANDALE CAR LINE

SIDEWALKS, SEWER, GAS, WATER AND ELECTRICITY IN THE STREET.

PAVEMENT WITHIN ONE BLOCK.

Remember this is the only close-in Addition in the city

Real Estate Investments

LEVITT INVESTMENT CO.

202 E. Youngman Bldg. Phone - Walnut 1734

| CLARK STREET | | 30 SECOND STREET | |
|--------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| 1 | SOLD | 11 | \$650 |
| 2 | \$625 | 12 | \$620 |
| 3 | \$615 | 13 | \$615 |
| 4 | \$680 | 14 | SOLD |
| 5 | \$560 | 15 | \$560 |
| 6 | \$540 | 16 | \$540 |
| 7 | \$525 | 17 | \$525 |
| 8 | SOLD | 18 | \$500 |
| 9 | \$475 | 19 | \$475 |
| 10 | \$350 | 20 | \$375 |
| 11 | 142 | 21 | 135 |

Invest Your Savings in the BEST AVAILABLE PROPERTY in Des Moines. \$1 Per Week Payments

SALESMEN ON GROUNDS SUNDAY AND MONDAY

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ORAL HISTORY

Lewis A. Royal, telephone interview with William C. Page; October 26, 1995. Lewis A. Royal is the great-nephew of Nelson Royal.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Containing the following city lots in Bates Addition to the City of Des Moines: 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, and 51.

Also containing the public parkland known as Bates Park.

(Note: Lot 46 has been subdivided into three parcels, each of which contains an historic single-family dwelling.)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The National Register boundary contains all land associated historically with this resource.

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Looking southwest
William C. Page, Photographer
November 23, 1995
2. Bates Park Historic District
4th Street between Orchard and Clark Streets
Des Moines, IA 50314
Panorama
Looking southwest
William C. Page, Photographer
November 23, 1995
3. Bates Park Historic District
4th Street between Orchard and Clark Streets
Des Moines, IA 50314
Panorama
Looking southwest
William C. Page, Photographer
November 23, 1995
4. Bates Park Historic District
4th Street between Orchard and Clark Streets
Des Moines, IA 50314
Stables and alley west of 4th Street
Looking southeast
William C. Page, Photographer
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5. Bates Park Historic District
4th Street between Orchard and Clark Streets
Des Moines, IA 50314
House
1439, 1437, 1435, and 1429 4th Street (left to right)
Looking southeast
William C. Page, Photographer
November 23, 1995

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UTM References Continued

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7 [11 5] [4 4 8 1 1 6 1 5] [4 6 1 0 5 1 8 1 8 1 0]
Zone Easting Northing

8 [11 5] [4 4 8 1 1 6 1 5] [4 6 1 0 6 1 0 1 0 1 0]
Zone Easting Northing