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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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Boehmler, H.E. house
other names/site number Boehmler, H.E. house

2. Location

street & number 105-2nd Street S.E. not for publication
city, town Hampton vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Franklin code 069 zip code 50441

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
[Signature] 10/31/91
Signature of certifying official 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.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:) _____
[Signature] 12/13/91
for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Prairie School

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls Brick

roof Clay tileother Limestone beltcourses and trim, white-painted wood facia, soffits, fence and arbor

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The H. E. Boehmler house is a dignified two-story brick structure combining formal composition, (achieved through the symmetry and regularity of the main block), with Prairie School characteristics such as a low hipped roof, banded windows, and the use of natural materials. Situated on a corner lot in one of the oldest residential neighborhoods in Hampton, Iowa, the Boehmler house stands out among the surrounding similar-vintage residences (which are primarily vertically-oriented, frame vernacular structures). Constructed in 1915, the house cost approximately \$18,000.

The architectural drawings, specifications and other documents bear the name of the architectural firm of (J.H.) Jeffers and (Einar) Broaten. Although the evidence seems to suggest that Broaten was primarily responsible for the design, this point is unclear. Little is known about J.H. Jeffers. The city directory for Mason City, Iowa lists him as practicing on his own both in 1912 and 1917, and in partnership with Broaten in 1915. A group nomination of Prairie School architecture in Mason City, however, includes no designs attributed to him.

Einar Broaten, on the other hand, is known to have designed structures of Prairie School derivation. Indeed, the Boehmler house resembles others attributed to him, especially with respect to the gabled roofs, as will be discussed later.

In any case, the house looks very much the way it did upon completion. The exterior is virtually unaltered, with the exception of the addition of a small garage on the west side which is not visible from the front of the house. The interior is also remarkably intact, except for the kitchen which has undergone extensive remodeling. Further information about the integrity of the fabric, along with details concerning alterations are included in the "significance" section of this document.

The main block of the house is a solid rectangular box of rough brown brick capped by a low hipped roof of clay tile. All the elements of the main block are arranged symmetrically around a centrally-placed one-story projecting entrance portal. The gabled roof over this entryway ends in horizontal eaves, and is repeated over the dormer directly above to create a vertical counterpoint to the overall horizontality of the composition.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1915

Significant Dates

1915

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Jeffers, J.H. and Broaten, Einar

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The H.E. Boehmler house in Hampton, Iowa, is a uniquely well-preserved representative of a significant aspect of Prairie School design: its interpretation in the small-town Midwestern residence. Its location in north central Iowa is of special note, due to the ties of the Prairie School to this area.

Also contributing to its significance is the prominence of architect Einar Broaten, who appears to have been largely responsible for the design. The house was completed at the height of Prairie School influence in the area and included both characteristic and innovative features.

As part of an international movement toward a new design approach, the Prairie School has special significance in Iowa and the Midwestern United States. The movement began in quickly-expanding turn-of-the-century Chicago, where a new type of space-efficient, commercial architecture was developed. Characterized by iron skeletal framing, frank expression of the structural system and avoidance of historicism, the movement became known as the "Chicago School" and was led by Louis Sullivan, the master of naturalistic ornament.

Sullivan's ideas drew young, progressive architects to his office - among them, Frank Lloyd Wright, who worked for Sullivan from 1887 to 1893. When a disagreement interrupted their collaboration, Wright set off on his own and shifted the focus of the evolving architectural movement away from Sullivan's commercial designs to the suburban residence.

It was primarily in this arena that Wright's characteristic "Prairie School" expression took form. Wright and others in his circle (Marion Mahoney, Walter Burley Griffin, and Barry Byrne, among others) were in part responding to an international movement toward honesty and simplicity in design, particularly the Arts and Crafts movement in England. They combined and distilled many approaches in the continuing search for a quintessentially "American" architecture.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blum, Joyce, personal interview October, 1990, personal collection (specifications, architectural drawings, receipts, historic photographs).

Brooks, Allen H. ed. The Prairie School - Frank Lloyd Wright and His Contemporaries. Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 1972.

Environmental Planning and Research, Inc. Mason City, Iowa, A Historic Heritage, Inc., Jan. 1977.

Minnesota Museum of Art. Prairie School Architecture in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin. Minnesota Museum of Art, 1982.

See continuation sheet

- Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other private collection (specifications, architectural drawings, receipts, historic photos); Dep of Architecture, Iowa State University;

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A

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4	7	3	1	8	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The East Half (E 1/2) of Lots One (1) and Two (2) and the East Eight Feet (E 8') of the West Half (W 1/2) of Lots One (1) and Two (2), all in Block Thirty (30), Original Town of Hampton, Franklin, County, Iowa. (From Warranty Deed recorded May, 1990, Recorder, Franklin County, Iowa).

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Wallace, graduate student

organization Iowa State University date December 4, 1990

street & number Department of Architecture telephone 232-4717

city or town Ames state IA zip code 50011

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This horizontality is established partly by the window groupings, which are repeated on the facade of the main block of the house. This grouping consists of a fixed, wide central window flanked by two narrow double-hung windows. Muntins further divide the lights into narrow rectangles, adding a further vertical accent to the composition.

Also contributing to the horizontality of the house are thin limestone belt courses, one of which articulates the division between the basement and the first floor. The second belt course acts as a continuous sill under the second-floor windows which lie just beneath the eaves. The eaves of the house also extend its lines through the use of wide overhangs and enclosed soffits.

Extensions to the main block stretch the composition most noticeably, however. A small two-story wing on the south features banded casement windows illuminating a sun parlor on the first floor and a sleeping porch on the second. The belt coursing continues around the projection, tying it to the main block.

This horizontal line is continued by an attached arbor and screen wall consisting of brick piers, a low brick wall and a wooden fence. The linear pattern of the fence echoes the pattern of the muntins, and adds a further vertical accent. This screen wall connects the house with a matching garage which features the gabled roof of the entrance portal and serves to balance the composition.

Many aspects of the exterior of the Boehmler house establish its consistency with Prairie School principles, including the low hipped roof, the spreading eaves with their enclosed soffits, the horizontally-grouped windows, and the placement of the second-story windows close under the eaves.

Also in keeping with Prairie School thinking is the honest use of natural materials. The brick, for instance, clearly shows the marks left in the clay by the wire cutters (the surface continuity created by the narrow range of hues and the choice of colored mortar, however, lends a slightly more formal effect). The use of clay tile on the roof also conforms to Prairie School principles, as it was a natural, locally-abundant material. Nearby Mason City was noted in that day for its production of clay masonry, especially tile.

Several aspects, however, are more traditional, including the symmetry of the main block, the central placement of the entrance portal, the reliance on a single facing material (as opposed to including a band of stucco on the upper level, for instance), the inclusion of a dormer, and the use of double-hung sash windows rather than casements in the main block.

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The gabled roofs also depart from Prairie School ideas. They resemble those of at least two other documented Broaten designs,¹ and at least two designs tentatively attributed to him.² Mason City, Iowa: A Historic Heritage notes that Broaten's use of this particular profile "...may have been inspired by the gable roof forms of [Walter Burley] Griffin's Page house and [Barry] Byrne's Gilmore house."³

Like the exterior, the spacious, well-lit interior of the house mixes Prairie School and more traditional principles. Again, natural materials such as wood, brick and tile predominate. In fact, the architect specified several species of wood for different areas (quarter-sawn white oak for the main staircase and red gumwood trim in the sun parlor, for instance). Many rooms feature built-in bookcases, seating and storage areas.

The plan of the interior, is relatively "open." A line of sight connects all the main first floor rooms. One can stand in the living room in the north end of the house and look directly through the entrance area and the dining room into the sun parlor on the south.

The entrance area, between the living room and dining room, serves as a focal point due to its location. Its importance is enhanced by the beautiful vestibule door which features a large panel of stained glass. Executed mainly in hues of gold and green, the rectilinear, vertical pattern is typical of the Prairie School aesthetic for stained glass. Beveled plate glass lights adorn the outer door and its flanking sidelights.

The main staircase lies directly across the entrance area from the doorway. Open and somewhat wider than normal, it features a handrail and balustrade of simple design.

The living room received special treatment by the architect, most notably in the broad, finely-crafted wooden arch which frames the large bay window. A dark brick fireplace flanked by glass-doored bookcases occupies the entire west wall and parallel beams span the ceiling.

This parallel beam pattern becomes a beam-and-cross-beam pattern in the dining room. This room also features a buffet designed specifically for the Boehmler house, which the present owner has recently recovered from former owners of the house.

French doors divide the dining room from the sun parlor, which features casement windows and a second dark-brick fireplace. The same brick also covers the two outer walls, and is similar to the exterior brick. Small squares of red encaustic tile cover the floor.

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The virtually unaltered second story contains four large bedrooms, an unheated sleeping porch and the main bathroom. The bathroom retains most of the original fixtures, including the tub, stool and pedestal sink. Even the original wall treatment, plaster scored in a brickwork pattern, remains intact.

Many aspects of the interior relate it to Prairie School planning, including the use of casement windows in the sun parlor, which tend to visually integrate the "inside" and "outside." Also, the architect treated the walls in this room with the brick similar to that used on the exterior, another unifying device.

The placement of the entrance in relation to the first floor rooms conforms to the ideas of Edward Bok, editor of the Ladies' Home Journal. Bok published early designs by Frank Lloyd Wright as well as several other architects. He advocated Prairie School principles, focusing especially on abolishing the wasteful "parlor" traditionally used only to receive callers. A common solution to avoid ushering guests directly into the living space was to locate a small entrance area between the living room and dining room, and allowing access to the main staircase, as was done in the Boehmler house.⁴

Other aspects of the design relate it more closely to Craftsman ideas. (The Craftsman movement coincided roughly with the Prairie School movement and shared many of its principles. Gustav Stickley and other advocates of this approach advocated simple - especially handcrafted - design, the honest use of natural materials, and the inclusion of built-in features such as bookcases). The living room fireplace arrangement, for instance, is more reminiscent of the Craftsman aesthetic than of the Prairie School (Prairie School planning tended to follow the lead of Frank Lloyd Wright in setting up the fireplace as a centrally-located focal point and screening element between otherwise adjoining rooms - a symbolic "family hearth").

The Boehmler house exhibits the open planning and use of natural materials common to both Prairie School and Craftsmen interiors. The simply-designed woodwork in particular relies on the beauty of the material for effect, rather than intricate carving. The inlaid slab doors found throughout the house epitomize this concept.

Many interesting features remain, including separate coal chutes for hard and soft coal, and a central vacuum system (used quite often in the more expensive Prairie School houses). An underground heating system in the garage (no longer operable) was designed to offset the poor cold-weather starting ability of the earliest cars. In addition, the garage has been wired for electricity since its construction.

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CFN-259-1116

In general, the Boehmler house makes a statement about its original owners, who were prominent citizens of Hampton. Its relative formality conveys respectability and stature in the community, while the choice of the non-traditional Prairie School design and the inclusion of the latest conveniences conveys a certain progressiveness in that era of optimism.

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CFN-259-1116

Ultimately, the climate, landforms and lifestyle of the prairies provided the inspiration for new principles and forms which became known as the "Prairie School." The image of a "shelter on the broad prairie" is reflected in the long, low horizontals, the wide eaves, the integration with the landscape and the simplicity of expression. Even a common vernacular form, the hipped-gable cottage, found its way into the Prairie School idiom. The movement soon spread from its nucleus in Chicago, interpreted by numerous architects and builders. Given this birthright, it is not surprising that some of the most important and interesting examples of this movement are found in small towns in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin.

Iowa in particular has special ties to Prairie School architecture. Frank Lloyd Wright's involvement in the design of two commercial buildings in Mason City spawned a development which became the largest concentration of Prairie School architecture in the United States - the Rock Crest/Rock Glen development. The area features high quality examples of Prairie School designs by Frank Lloyd Wright's contemporaries, Walter Burley Griffin and Barry Byrne.

Many factors converged to make Rock Crest/Rock Glen possible. Mason City's growth period from 1900 to 1920 coincided with the arrival of the wave of Prairie School popularity which originated in Chicago some years earlier. The boom in agriculture (which was partly responsible for Mason City's prosperity) had a similar, although less dramatic, effect in many small Midwestern towns like Hampton.

Einar Broaten's own involvement with Rock Crest/Rock Glen contributed to his prominence. Broaten arrived from his native Norway sometime after 1912. A "talented designer,"⁵ he accepted a commission for the Samuel Davis Drake house in 1914. This house eventually earned National Register status, as part of the Rock Crest/Rock Glen nomination.⁶ A second successful group nomination of Prairie School structures outside this development, "Prairie School Architecture in Mason City, Iowa", included another Broaten design, that of the Senior/Mier Wolf house, variously dated from 1909 to 1920.⁷

Broaten's numerous projects were done both on his own and in brief partnerships with J.H. Jeffers ca. 1915 and W.E. Mincy ca. 1917.⁸ The range of Broaten's projects, both in type and location, indicates his significant productivity and influence. His documented work includes residences and commercial and public buildings in six towns in north central Iowa. In addition, Prairie School researchers tentatively credit him with at least three other residences in Mason City and surrounding towns. He was one of several local architects who picked up the style and adapted it to the client's needs. Little else is known about Broaten's life or work.

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There is some evidence that the H. E. Boehmler House influenced the design of other homes in the area. For instance, the Kohl House at 122 Fourth Street, S.E. was constructed a few years later (Circa 1920). One author, Richard Guy Wilson, tentatively credits Broaten with the design of this house, which resembles the Boehmler House in some ways (Wilson 1977, p. 73). Also of interest is the recollection of H. E. Boehmler's son, Ronald Boehmler of Hampton. He states that the builder of the H. E. Boehmler House, John Hamilton of Hamilton Brothers Construction in Hampton, became a proponent of Prairie School principles due to 1) his admiration of the design of the H. E. Boehmler House (which was his first big project), and 2) the knowledge gained from working closely with the architect who, he recalls, personally supervised much of the construction (personal interview, November 1990). Indeed, there are several homes in Hampton in addition to the Kohl House and the H. E. Boehmler House, which exhibit Prairie School characteristics.

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The Boehmler house exemplifies the adaptation to small-town needs and tastes. The overall massing and symmetry convey a certain respectability and status in the community often desired by upper-middle-class community businessmen. Mr. Boehmler himself was a prominent pharmacist, and his wife was a well-known art teacher who conducted classes in their home.

And yet, the house reflects a certain progressiveness by incorporating many Prairie School features including banded windows, belt courses, a low hipped roof with wide eaves, and a connecting arbor-and-fence extension between the main house and the garage. These features establish its basic horizontality. Natural materials, used unpretentiously, further contribute to its Prairie School orientation.

Interior Prairie School characteristics include the open plan, the extensive use of wood in ways which exploit its natural qualities, and the use of the exterior brick on the interior. The house also features a panel of stained glass in the vestibule door of definite Prairie School origin.

Unique and innovative aspects include the first-story gables, and the wide variety of woods used (including white oak, red oak, birch, gumwood and pine). The architect also included progressive features such as a central vacuum system, an intercom system for summoning the maid, and heating and wiring for the garage.

Most significant of all is the high degree of integrity of the original fabric. The exterior of the house has been preserved in nearly its original state, due largely to the original owner's occupation of the house until 1970. The house changed hands twice after that, and was finally purchased in 1990 by Mrs. Joyce Blum, the granddaughter of the original owner.

The main facade is virtually unaltered. A frame garage was added to the rear of the house in the early 1970's. Fairly sympathetic in scale, color and roof line, this addition is easily reversible due to the care taken to avoid damaging the original fabric. An overhead door now replaces the swing-out doors on the original garage. In addition, portions of the wooden soffits on the main house have been replaced with metal.

The landscape has also been somewhat altered - an unobtrusive driveway was added on the north to allow access to the new garage, and the original shrubbery has been replaced with rows of seedling shrubs on either side of the entrance portal.

The present owner has carried out repairs carefully, and with respect for the integrity of the house. Fortunately, the original owner stockpiled

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extra clay roof tiles, which were used in 1990 to replace several which had broken. Mrs. Blum also had the wooden balustrade of the deteriorated screenwall extension carefully rebuilt, had portions of the masonry re-pointed with carefully-matched mortar, cleaned the limestone trim with a wire brush, and re-painted the white wood trim. Virtually all the original storms and screens remain in good repair. A historic photograph served as a guide for many of the repairs.

Like the exterior, the interior of the house is substantially unaltered. The notable exception is the kitchen, which has been extensively remodeled. Other changes include the replacement of a few small fixtures in the main bathroom, the alternation of a half-bath downstairs, and the carpeting of some rooms (since removed). The wallpaper originally covering several walls has also been replaced. Invisible alternations include the removal of asbestos, the removal of an intercom system, the replacement of the furnace, and the rewiring of the entire house to meet modern needs.

The Boehmler house exemplifies the dissemination of Prairie School design principles into the areas surrounding Chicago, and the contributions made by local architects. In particular, it represents the impact of the world-renowned Rock Crest/Rock Glen development in Mason City, Iowa. Fortunately, these influences are clearly discernable, due to the integrity of the original fabric and the commitment of the present owner to maintaining that integrity.

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ENDNOTES

¹The E.V. Stillman house, 400 Seventh Ave. N., Clear Lake, Iowa, 1917, and the Samuel Davis Drake house, 28 South Carolina St., Mason City, Iowa, 1914-1917.

²The Kohl house, 122 Fourth St., Hampton, Iowa, ca. 1920, and the Seaney (alternate spelling "Seney") house, 622 N. Washington Avenue, Mason City, Iowa, ca. 1920.

³Environmental Planning and Research, Inc. Mason City, Iowa: A Historical Heritage. Jan., 1977, p. SE-28.

⁴Minnesota Museum of Art. Prairie School Architecture in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin. Minnesota Museum of Art. 1982, pp. 47-48.

⁵Environmental Planning and Research, Inc., p. 21.

⁶"Rock Crest/Rock Glen, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa". National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, (form prepared by Muffy Mitchell), 1966, p. 1.

⁷"Prairie School Architecture in Mason City, Iowa," National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, 1966, n.p.

⁸Environmental Planning and Research, Inc., p. 21.

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"Prairie School Architecture in Mason City, Iowa", National Register of
Historic Places Registration Form, 1966.

"Rock Crest/Rock Glen, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa", National
Register of Historic Places Registration Form, (form prepared by Muffy
Mitchell), 1966.

Wilson, Richard Guy and Sidney K. Robinson. The Prairie School in Iowa.
Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1977.

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PHOTOS

1. View looking southwest, (ca. 1916).
2. View looking southwest, showing context and similarity to historic appearance.
3. East (front) elevation, detail, view looking west.
4. North elevation, view looking southeast, showing garage addition.
5. South and west elevations, view looking northeast.
6. Vestibule door with stained glass light.
7. Bay window in living room with arched frame.
8. Detail, arched frame, living room bay window.
9. Inlaid slab door (between kitchen and living room).
10. Detail, upstairs bathroom wall, scored in brick pattern.