

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 18 1979
DATE ENTERED DEC 28 1979

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Rock Crest/Rock Glen *Historic District*
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *04 U.S. 18*
CITY, TOWN Mason City VICINITY OF Third
STATE Iowa CODE Cerro Gordo CODE

CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME multiple ownership; see continuation sheet
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN STATE
VICINITY OF

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Cerro Gordo County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN STATE
Mason City Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Masin City, Iowa: A Historic Heritage
DATE

January 1977 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Dept. Community Development, Mason City Iowa
CITY, TOWN STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Rock Crest/Rock Glen historic district, located on the southeast side of Mason City, includes eight Prairie School houses and the ruins of a mill. The properties are bounded on the north by State Street, on the west by Rock Glen Street, and along the southeast by the crest delineated by S. Carolina Avenue and River Heights Drive. Meandering through the district is Willow Creek, with the glen on the north and west sides of the district and the crest on the southeast. Six of the houses in the district are grouped together facing State Street and Rock Glen Street, and are interrupted only by the McNider house, built in 1959 by Curtis Besinger. These six houses share the glen as a common boundary. The other two houses are situated on the crest. The mill ruins are located down on the west bank of Willow Creek.

The Schneider house, built in 1915 by Barry Byrne from original plans by Walter Burley Griffin, is a two-story house at street level and three stories on the glen side, with a stone base and hollow tile, covered with stucco, on the upper floors. The house has a low-pitched hipped roof whose horizontality is emphasized by deep fascia capping. Exterior bands of stained concrete divide the upper floors from the remainder of the house, forming a stringcourse which adds to the sense of horizontality.

The basically square plan has a projecting solarium on the east side. A bridge on the west side leads from the street to the main entranceway, which is located on the dining room level. A large picture window in the living room opens out onto the glen and its horizontal feeling is marked by the fascia capping of the cantilevered awning over the window. A band of narrow clerestory windows is set above the awning, and another such band is found in the solarium. Fenestration on the first floor is plain, while third floor windows feature wooden muntins. Their design is a rectangular pattern attributed to Barry Byrne, and differs from the triangular motif originally planned by Griffin.

The Gilmore house, built in 1915 by Barry Byrne, is a stone and stucco structure. On the street elevation, it is only 1½ stories, with a central doorway directly on axis from the street entrance. From the glen elevation, the house rises a full three stories with the ground floor constructed of rough-hewn stone. The entire house is capped with a low-pitched gable roof with narrow eaves thrded down at the ends and indented a foot or so from the corners. This unusual treatment of the roofline creates "a narrow band of flat roof between gable eaves 'walls' and the main walls of the building."¹

The entrance to the house at street level provides a connecting point to two floors. The entrance is along on its own level, with the sleeping floors a half-story above and the living areas a half-story below. The plan for the house is closed in comparision with houses built earlier in the glen. Doors separate rooms, and the fireplace that often served as a room divider does not function in that capacity in this instance.

The original house plan included an exterior balcony across from the fireplace wall. That has been enclosed and a large bedroom added over the dining room. The house was originally built with three bedrooms and a bath on the top floor. On the southeast, a deck has been added, providing a carport below and in front of the original garage.

Exterior surfaces are plain, and window areas are articulated into simple rectangular panes, a design repeated in the pattern of the front door.

see continuation sheet

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | OCT 18 1979 |
| DATE ENTERED | DEC 28 1979 |

Rock Crest/Rock Glen, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The Franke house is a three-story structure built in 1917 by Barry Byrne, and was the last to be constructed in the glen. It is located between the Gilmore house on the east and the Rule house on the west. The lower level and portions of the main living floor are faced with rough-hewn stone. The upper levels are stucco, applied in a smooth coat. The Franke house is the only house in the glen to have this particular treatment of the stucco. A high-pitched hipped roof covers the house and its projecting wings.

Of all the houses in the glen, the Franke house has been the most altered. The glazed windows, divided into rectangular panes by wooden muntins, have been replaced and several rooms, such as one over the solarium, added.

The Rule house is a two-story hollow tile structure with stucco covering. It was built between 1912 and 1913, designed by Walter Burley Griffin. It varies from the other houses in Rock Crest/Rock Glen due to its unified construction material: unlike the other houses, the Rule house does not have a stone base.

The plan of the house is a square with a projecting solarium on the south side. The bedroom above the solarium was added later, but both main house and the solarium portion have low, overhanging hipped roofs.

Massive piers accent the four corners of the house, but rise only to the height of the second-floor wrap-around windows. The piers were designed to house copper planters. The corner windows, as well as those grouped in bands in the dining room, are leaded with four rectangular pieces of yellow-green glass for accents. Wooden muntins further enhance the design of the windows. Wooden trellis projections shade these window areas.

The Page house is constructed with a reinforced concrete structural system, and exterior walls of stuccoed clay tile on an ashlar stone base. It was built in 1912 (the first house constructed in the glen) from designs by Walter Burley Griffin. The house is two stories on the street elevation, three on the glen side. It has a gable roof, enlivened with a slight flare at the edges of the raking eaves, an orientalizing touch that Griffin used occasionally in his earlier houses (for example, the B.J. Ricker house in Grinnell). An arched window is cut into the stone of the base, and contrasts with the rectangular windows of the two upper stories, in which wood muntins are used to create diamond-like patterns.

From the glen side, the central section of the house rises three stories. It is divided into four bays, each articulated with a window and applied concrete strips, indicating the architect's attempts to articulate the structural framework beneath. The shorter wings create a cruciform plan, and their gable roofs form an intersecting roof pattern.

The Page house has been extensively remodelled. Woodwork on the second floor has been painted. Mullions between the center windows in the living room, and window bands in the solarium, have been removed, and the casement windows on the first floor replaced. A two-car garage has been built where the street entrance was in the original plan.

See continuation sheet

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | OCT 18 1979 |
| DATE ENTERED | DEC 28 1979 |

Rock Crest/ Rock Glen, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The Blythe house, built 1913-14 by Walter Burley Griffin, is a two-story split-level structure with a stone base and hollow tile with stucco covering above. Portions of the structure are of reinforced concrete and the decorative panels below the second floor windows are made from cast concrete. This massive structure is capped with a nearly flat hipped roof with articulated cornice ends. The central core rises slightly above the flanking wings, providing a balanced structure. A picture window in the garage wall adds to this sense of symmetry. Windows are leaded in a triangular pattern with red-colored panes for accent.

Projecting from the southwest end of the house is the solarium, which is connected to both the living room and the dining room by a low-ceilinged access area. Large (approx. 10 feet long) sash windows on either side of the French doors open up the solarium further, and give eye-level access from both the living room and the dining room.

The Melson house, built between 1912 and 1914, and also by Griffin, was the first to be built on the south side of the Rock Crest/Rock Glen development. It is a two-story ashlar structure set firmly on a limestone cliff. At cliff level, the house rises three stories with a projecting bay at the base. Distinctive of Griffin's work are the four corner piers which visually support the upper portion of the house and which provide a vertical theme repeated in the decorative poured concrete window mullions. This decorative quality over the recessed ribbon windows echoes the sense of verticality inherent in a house rising out of its surroundings. Literally growing from its magnificent site overlooking Rock Glen, it still retains a sense of being a part of, and in harmony with, the dramatic landscape. The horizontality of the ribbon windows helps achieve this feeling.

Square in plan, except for the projecting two-car drive-through garage on the south side, the format of the house is similar to others in the Rock Crest/Rock Glen district. The only room on the first floor separated by walls is the service area. A hearth provides the division between the living room and dining room, within a flowing open plan.

A solarium off the main floor is the central portion of a "massive projecting bay that grows upward by successively projecting stages (that suggest a crystal formation) from the relatively smaller bay of the family roof on the lowest level to the larger bay off the living room on the middle level. The roof of this bay forms a porch for the two bedrooms facing the creek on the top level."²

There is no visible roof overhang, as the radiating concrete forms rising from the top story hide all roof structure. The roof is hipped behind the screen of keystones. "The absence of the usual overhanging roof emphasizes a volumetrically sculptured quality."³ This sense of sculptured form is reinforced by the textured stonework of the walls, in contrast with the poured concrete forms of the window decorations.

On the interior the stonework of the walls is repeated in the fireplace. The keystone motif reappears over the hearth opening.

See continuation sheet

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | OCT 18 1979 |
| DATE ENTERED | DEC 28 1979 |

Rock Drest/ Rock Glen, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

The Drake house, built by Einer Broaten between 1912 and 1914 is a two-story stone and stucco house with a wide overhanging hipped roof. Square in plan, the house has a one-story solarium projecting on the south side, also covered with a hipped roof with wide eaves. The main entrance portal and the garage on the east end have gabled roofs with turned-up eave ends similar to the roof design of the Page house.

Stone facing is used at the base of the solarium to the height of the windows but does not continue around to the front elevation as a unifying element. The stone is used more as an accent and reappears as squat piers flanking the entrance, and also as the central part of the garage wall.

The fenestration is marked by a continuous band of concrete projecting slightly at the base of all the windows. The cross-diagonal design of the ribbon windows in the solarium and the second floor corner wrap-around windows are reminiscent of Griffin's window designs found in other houses in Rock Crest/Rock Glen.

The mill ruins, located east of the Blythe and Page houses, consist of stone foundations and a badly worn slab of concrete above. One side of the foundation is missing, leaving a projecting edge of concrete cantilevered over the creek.

Footnotes:

¹Environmental Planning & Research, SE-25.

²Ibid. , SE-24.

³Ibid., SE-30.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1912-1917

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Walter Burley Griffin; Marion Mahoney
Barry Byrne; Einar Broaten

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Rock Crest/Rock Glen area is important in the course of American architecture for several reasons:

1. It is the best example of Walter Burley Griffin's work planned for the United States.
2. The district also displays works of several prominent architects other than Griffin, including Barry Byrne and Marion Mahoney. Furthermore, several designs that were never built also represent work of other well-known architects of the first two decades of the 20th century, including Frank Lloyd Wright, and Purcell and Elmslie.
3. The district is a cohesive unit, displaying homogeneity of spacing, scale, mass, materials, and an adherence to the vocabulary of the Prairie School.
4. Historically, it is a good example of planned community development in the U.S. and is the first in Mason City. It represents a then novel idea, supported and successfully financed by some of Mason City's businessmen.

Mason City experienced tremendous growth between 1900 and 1920. In 1900 the city had a population of 6,746 and in twenty years it had grown to some 20,000. The city's agricultural market as well as its cement and brick and tile industries were mainly responsible for its growth. It was during this period that the Prairie School flourished in Mason City.

Three community leaders are noted as the promoters of the Prairie School in Mason City. James Blythe, born in New Jersey, came to Mason City in 1877. He worked for a local law firm and later went into a private partnership with another local attorney named Goddykoontz, after being admitted to the Iowa bar. In 1881, Blythe convinced J.E.E. Markley, a Marshalltown lawyer, to come to Mason City to join his practice. It was Markley's association with Frank Lloyd Wright (Markley's daughter attended Hillside School in Wisconsin, run by a relative of Wright's and designed by Wright), that brought the Prairie School to Mason City. Joshua Melson, a native of Iowa, came to Mason City to work with local builder E.R. Bogardus. He later left to work independently, and in 1902 built the Commercial Block for a group of Mason City businessmen headed by James Blythe.

Between 1902 and 1908, Melson purchased the section along Willow Creek from Mrs. A.T. Parker. In the latter year, Melson advertised his plans to develop a tract of 22 acres with 10 houses, to be connected by a drive through the area. A section of land along the creek was to become a park. These were the first seeds of what was to become the first planned restricted community development in Mason City. With the architectural and landscape guidance of Walter Burley Griffin, an agreement was written among the property owners "to preserve and improve the natural beauty of their lands and the stream flowing between them."¹

See continuation sheet

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McCoy, Robert E., "Rock Crest/Rock Glen: Prairie School Planning in Iowa," Prairie School Review, Vol. #., No. 3 (1960). Prairie School Press, Inc., Palos Park, Ill., 5-39.
 Wilson, Richard Guy. The Prairie School in Iowa. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1977.
 Brooks, H. Allen. The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwest Contemporaries. New York: W.W. Norton, 1972.
 Environmental Planning and Research, Inc. Mason City, Iowa: A Historic Heritage. Jan. 1977.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ap prox. 12 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Mason City, Iowa

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 484480 4777480

B 15 484480 4777360

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 15 484350 4777170

D 15 484260 4777160

E 15 484275 4777370

F 15 484325 4777480

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet for item 4, p. 1, for legal descriptions of the lots comprising this district.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Muffy Mitchell (art historian and volunteer to Iowa SHPO, Iowa City IA)

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Spring, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

c/o H. Fong, 1102 Alewa Drive.

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Honolulu

Hawaii

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

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

Admin. A. Anderson

TITLE

Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

8/10/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/28/79

ATTEST:

W. Ray Luce
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12.28.79

William H. Bradman
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 18 1979

DATE ENTERED

DEC 28 1979

Rock Crest/Rock Glen, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Out of the 16 houses that were planned by Griffin for the development, only 8 were built, and of these, only 5 were built as Griffin had originally intended. These five were the Page, Rule, Melson, Blythe and Schneider houses, the latter begun by Griffin and completed by Barry Byrne. The Gilmore and Franke houses were all Byrne's, and the Drake house was done by Mason City architect Einar Broaten.

The north side of the creek was developed as planned, except for one empty lot between the Rule and Page houses, later occupied by the McNider house (1959). The Melson and Drake houses were the only ones built on the south side. Subsequent development has diluted some of the continuity of the area as originally planned, but the sense of Griffin's intentions is still apparent.

Several other architects were associated with Rock Crest/Rock Glen, although to lesser, and varying, degrees. Frank Lloyd Wright may have been intended as the chief designer of the plan, for he was in Mason City at the time, overseeing construction of his City National Bank and Park Hotel, completed in 1910. Wright was asked by Joshua Melson to design a house for him. The plans submitted were later built as the Isabel Roberts house in River Forest, Ill. Purcell and Elmslie were also potential contributors to Rock Crest/Rock Glen: they submitted a design for the house later known as the Page house, but the house actually constructed was the work of Griffin. Marion Mahoney was brought into the project at the invitation of Joshua Melson. Her contributions to the project are best seen in the detailing of the Melson house and in the presentation drawings for the development and its individual structures.

Walter Burley Griffin came to Mason City in 1912, and helped select sites for the houses he was later to design. When he later left for Australia to oversee his Canberra project, he left Barry Byrne in charge of the Rock Crest/Rock Glen development. Byrne completed the Schneider house and later designed the Gilmore and Franke houses. His plan for the Drake house was rejected by the client, who turned to local architect Einar Broaten.

Several silk drawings and plans are known, and are the main source for Griffin's original plans for Rock Crest/Rock Glen. Only half the houses were constructed, and the major landscaping was never executed. Plans show that the three houses intended for State Street were to be connected by two courts between the houses. Tall trees would be a prominent landscape feature, enhanced by additional foliage in roof gardens.

Architecturally, the houses represent the largest cluster of Prairie School housing in the U.S. Described as organic architecture, the Prairie School combines the architectural principles of Louis Sullivan and the indigenous American tradition of domestic architecture. Its expression results in open and flowing plans and

See continuation sheet

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | OCT 18 1979 |
| DATE ENTERED | DEC 28 1979 |

Rock Crest/Rock Glen, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

the use of natural ornament possible by the integration of structural elements into formal design.

Within the framework of the Prairie School, we see the individual design elements characteristic of Walter Burley Griffin. His repeated use of heavy corner piers, as demonstrated in the Rule and Melson houses, shows his interest in vertical movement, a departure from the horizontality common in Prairie School design. His interest in this element also appears in the Schneider house, where he interconnects vertical space by placing rooms at different levels. Griffin's use of different ceiling heights, as in the Rule and Blythe houses, especially in the low ceilings of entranceways, is another example of his use of vertical space.

All Griffin's designs revolve around the open, flowing plan. All are square in format with a projecting solarium. All have few walls between rooms, usually only to designate service areas. All use the fireplace as a divider of space. Although all the plans are similar, the resulting expressions vary. Each house has a quality and spatial feeling unique to itself. The variations on the common theme are limitless in Griffin's hand, resulting in 5 architecturally interesting domestic commissions. His use of materials also varies, and contributes to the variety within his architecture. New expressions evolve out of the use of reinforced concrete, as in the Page house. We see the change in Griffin's architectural expression by comparing the Page house, the first built in the development, and the later Blythe house. In the Page house the primary expressive medium is the Japanese-like roofline. The use of reinforced concrete to outline the structural members also stems from Nippon architecture. (Japanese architecture was an influential factor in the work of Wright, and, to a degree, in the Prairie School.) From this form of expression we see the evolution of the Blythe house, with its eave-less form and ornamental panels reminiscent of Pre-Columbian designs. The visual rooflessness of the Melson house is also comparable.

Following Byrne's designs, we also see a movement toward simplicity of forms, recalling the European forms of Irving Gill. Ornament becomes nonexistent, and the forms are rectilinear and solid.

The mill site historically represents the second mill to be built in Mason City. It was constructed out of stone and wood in 1870, and built by John Knight, master millwright from Charles City. It was owned by H.G. Parker and sold to his cousin, A.T. Parker, in 1877. When the plans for Rock Crest/Rock Glen were finalized, the mill's wood superstructure was dismantled. Joshua Melson saved the stone foundations, and added concrete supports in order to house a hydroelectric station for the development (which was never built). Other plans for the foundation, none of which were executed, including using it as a pier support for a bridge across Willow Creek and as a small summer house.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

| |
|-----------------------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |
| RECEIVED OCT 18 1979 |
| DEC 28 1979 |
| DATE ENTERED |

Rock Crest/Rock Glen, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

Property Owners and Property Descriptions. All houses owner-occupied.

Blythe House, 431 1st St. SE, Mason City, 50401. Dr. Robert E. McCoy.

A.T. Parker Subdivision, Block 102, Parcel 6.

Page House, 21 Rock Glen, Mason City 50401. J.B. Chauncey.

Rock Glen Subdivision, Block 104, Parcel 2.

MacNider House, 15 Rock Glen, Mason City 50401. Tom MacNider.

A.T. Parker Subdivision, Block 104, Parcel 3.

NOTE: This house was not built until 1959, and thus does not technically meet National Register criteria. Its style, however, is very much in keeping with the original Rock Crest/Rock Glen houses, and may be considered "intrusive" only to the extent of its recent construction and the fact that it was not a part of the original plan for the area.

Rule House, 11 Rock Glen, Mason City 50401. J. Stephen Westly,

A.T. Parker Subdivision, Block 104, Parcel 4.

Franke House, 507 E. State Street, Mason City 50401. Benjamin J. Broghammer.

A.T. Parker Subdivision, Block 104, Parcel 5.

Gilmore House, 511 E. State Street, Mason City 50401. Jay M. Shriver.

A.T. Parker Subdivision, Block 104, W 44' of Parcel 6 and E 11' of Parcel 5.

Schneider House, 525 E. State Street, Mason City, 50401. John M. Crosman.

A.T. Parker Subdivision, Block 104, Parcel 6 except W 44'.

Drake House, 28 S. Carolina Ave., Mason City 50401. David N. Nelson.

Rock Crest Subdivision, Parcel 4.

Melson House, 56 River Heights Drive, Mason City 50401. Mrs. Marvel Shepherd.

Rock Crest Subdivision, Parcel 12.

Mill ruins, Willow Creek. Owned by Robert McCoy (see Blythe house, above).

A.T. Parker Subdivision, Block 104.

E STATE STREET

1ST ST. SE

ROCK GLEN

S. CAROLINE AVE

RULE FRANKIE GILMORE SCHWEIDER

MCWIDER

PAGE

MILL
RUINS

DRAKE

BLYTHE

WILLOU CREEK

MELSON

RIVER HEIGHTS DRIVE

N

BOUNDARY

Rock Crest/Rock Glen
Mason City, Cerro Gordo Co. Iowa

Sketch map: not to scale