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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

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  in the appropriate box 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 Rev. R. W. and Fannie E. Keeler House

other names/site number Henry C. Borzo House

2. Location

street & number 1430 - 10th Street  not for publication

city or town Des Moines  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  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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

David C. [Signature] CHIO 9/29/93  
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:)

Signature of the Keeper

entered in the  
National Register

Date of Action

Delores Byers 11/14/93

Name of Property

Rev. R. W. and Fannie E. Keeler House

County and State

Polk, Iowa

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing 1 Noncontributing 1 buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

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)

Late Victorian: Stick/Eastlake

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick, walls Clapboard, roof Asphalt shingles, other Colored glass

Narrative Description

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes 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" in all the boxes 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)

Architecture

Period of Significance

Circa 1889

Significant Dates

Circa 1889

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Detwiler and Bedford, Contract-builders of Des Moines

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical 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):

- 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

Name of repository:

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	11S	447450	4605980
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Lot 3 and South one-half (S 1/2) of lot 2, Block 2 of Harlan and Tubbs' Re-plat of McMartin and Snell's Addition to North Des Moines.  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification Boundary contains all property historically associated with resource.  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William C. Page, Craig P. Grenz, Public Historian

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date June 6, 1993

street & number 520 E. Sheridan telephone 515/243-5740

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 Craig P. and Johanna L. Grenz

street & number 1430 - 10th Street telephone 515/282-6946

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50314-2811

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.

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CFN-259-1116

Rev. R. W. and Fannie E. Keeler House, Polk County, Iowa

**DESCRIPTION**

Prominently sited in a once prosperous but now deteriorated neighborhood north of downtown Des Moines, the Rev. R. W. and Fannie E. Keeler House is a 2 1/2 story, rectangular, wood frame edifice that rests on brick foundations and is capped with a complex roof, which features small inset balconies in the attic gables. Stylistically, this house shows the influence of what has come to be called the Stick Style, especially as it was influenced by the Gothic Revival mode. The Keeler House exhibits Stick Style influence in its hip and gabled roof, decorative trussed attic balconies supported by massive decorative brackets, wide overhanging eaves that also exhibit decorative brackets, and wood clapboard walls that feature decorative patterns of horizontal boards. The wall treatments and decorative trim, especially the attic balconies, are Gothic Revival in inspiration, and this Gothic influence is carried over into the interior, especially the main staircase with its trefoil patterned balustrades. On the interior, the house appears to have undergone remarkably little change over the years. All woodwork on the first floor appears to have its original finish, and virtually all window and door trim on all levels of the building remain intact. Especially noteworthy are seven art glass windows that exhibit colored glass set in a variety of patterns. Despite its surroundings and lack of maintenance over the years, this residence, which is currently undergoing a careful historic rehabilitation, possesses a remarkable degree of exterior and interior integrity.

Only the one lot on which the Keeler House stands is included in this nomination, although the present owners of this property own lots on both sides of the house. One house stood on the lot to the west of the Keeler House and another house stood on the lot to its east, but both these buildings are now nonextant.

**HOUSE**

This is a 2-1/2-story, frame, single-family dwelling, which has remained single-family throughout its existence. The house consists of a 2-1/2-story main block, measuring approximately 32'x47', exclusive of the wrap-around porch on the facade. A 2-story bay window stands on the south elevation and measures approximately 4'x10'. Windows are mostly 2/2 double-hung sash throughout the building.

This building is counted as one contributing resource to this property.

**EXTERIOR**

The facade features the wrap-around porch, already mentioned, covering a double door entryway, as well as wide eaves with brackets that surround the house, and a cantilevered attic balcony. The south elevation features a 2-story bay window with another cantilevered attic balcony above it.

The house is covered by a complex roof system (see Plan of Roof). It features, basically, one hip roof truncated by a deck, into which a second, somewhat narrower, hip roof (also truncated by a deck)

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intersects. The main hip features a dormer window covered with a gable roof on the north elevation, a dormer covered with a shed roof on the west elevation, and a trussed attic balcony gable on the south elevation. The house features a balcony gable on the east elevation which cantilevers over the facade of the house. The building contains one centrally located, brick chimney.

The house contains rich architectural detailing. It includes decorative belts of vertical woodwork separating the basement and first floors and first and second floors. This decorative woodwork also separates the foundation from the first floor and is also found directly under the eaves, forming a cornice on all elevations. The brackets on this house are unusually exuberant and feature carved balls suspended on diagonal spindles, as well as scrollwork. The attic balconies feature spindlework for balustrade and column supports, as well as brackets. A series of three stepped windows, decorated with colored glass, are located on the north elevation, and these give light to the main stairwell. The wrap-around porch features spindlework columns with brackets.

Some alterations to this house took place during the first thirty years of its life. Major removals include a 1-story side porch located south of the dining room and a rear porch west of the kitchen (Sanborn fire insurance maps for 1890 and 1920).

**INTERIOR**

The interior of the Keeler House retains a high level of integrity. One reason for this is that the building has never been divided into apartments, a fate which many of its neighbors have suffered.

Basement

Originally consisting of two rooms, one at the rear and one under the middle section of the house, the basement was enlarged about 1965 by the excavation of a crawl space that stood under the front portion of the house. An adequate foundation was never built here, which later caused structural failure. The current owners are in the process of addressing this problem. The soft, locally manufactured brick, of which the walls are constructed, have also eroded during the period when the roof of the house was inadequately maintained. The basement features a walk-out flight of steps to grade and a panel configuration in the foundation under the south bay window.

First Floor

The building features, on the first floor, a reception hall and staircase, with a parlor that stands adjacent, separated by double pocket doors. The first floor also features a living room (also divided from the parlor by pocket doors), a library, dining room, and kitchen. Woodwork on the first floor retains its original finish. The wood itself appears to be edge-grain fir. Floors consist of heart pine plank fitted with tongue and groove. No original lighting fixtures remain. Other decorative features on the first floor include a fireplace in the living room. This fireplace is made of ceramic tile decorated

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in polychrome. A large, plate-glass, beveled mirror, surrounded by wood and false-grained composition material, stands above the fireplace, which is canted against two walls. The dining room has several built-in units, although these appear to postdate the building's construction.

The staircase to the chamber floor is an "L" stair design, with landing between the two runs of steps. The staircase features a newel post, carved with birds, and balustrade. The corner wall at the landing has a concave niche containing an inset shelf. The stairwell area also features three windows, placed in a stepped configuration, with colored glass panes.

Chamber Floor

The chamber, or second floor, features five bedrooms in addition to a sitting or dressing room. Rooms are arranged adjacent to a central hall. The front bedroom and dressing room are joined by double connecting doors. The south bedroom is also joined to the southwest bedroom by a connecting door.

Woodwork on the chamber floor consists of lesser quality materials than the first floor. Originally finished with milk-based paint, all of this finish remains.

Plumbed for water after original construction, the bathroom fixtures are of a later date. Several minor lighting fixtures appear to be original. (These were returned to the present owners from the Borzo family, the previous occupants.)

Attic

Accessed by winder stairs, the attic consists of one large room. This room was entirely finished with plaster and woodwork. (This woodwork is nonextant). Knee-high walls surround the entire room. The attic features two balconies. Both balconies are inset under a gable roof, while the facade balcony is also canted out from the facade line. The views from these balconies are toward the Des Moines River valley and the Iowa State Capitol Building. C. L. Keeler, son of Richard and Fannie, practiced dentistry using this room as his office.

A skylight is located with the main portion of the hip roof next to the chimney protrusion. Measuring 30"x30", the opening possessed fragments of textured colored glass. Original framework is nonextant.

**BARN**

Approximately 16'x18' in size, this side gable, wood-frame structure with dirt floor was probably built at the same time as the house. Originally constructed to shelter a horse (and possibly other livestock and chickens) this structure was reduced from 1-1/2 stories to 1-story sometime in the early

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Twentieth Century to serve as an automobile garage. The future of this structure is threatened by an infestation of termites.

This structure is counted as one noncontributing resource to this property.

### REHABILITATION

In 1990 the present owners acquired the property and began a major rehabilitation program. The building was first weatherized and secured. The building was cleaned of vast refuse accumulated over many years. Stabilization work was begun including patching the roof and supporting the house with steel beams. Plumbing, electrical, and gas systems were replaced. Rehabilitation work is on-going.

Restoration of the Keeler House began with the acquisition of the property in May 1990. A preservation plan had to be developed and that plan called for immediate need of protection against vandalism and drug-addicts. Implementation of a comprehensive plan called for emergency stabilization of the once vacant structure. Major damages to the interior of the house had been caused by roof leaks, broken windows and missing exterior doors. Original plaster walls, ceilings, and floors had been flooded and discolored from water trailing downwards to the basement. Original finishes on the woodwork have been scared from the infiltration of the water. Electrical systems and lighting fixtures had been vandalized, while plumbing was allowed to freeze and burst. The interior of the house was packed full of the previous owner's abandoned belongings. Arrangements to clear out the 35+ tons of debris and 10,000+ books became a major undertaking.

The exterior of the building was covered with asphalt shingle siding and porches had been enclosed with a collage of wooden screen windows. The existing back porch was infested with termites causing the roof to collapse. Attic balcony porches had been disfigured with the addition of the screens, and ornamental woodwork had been removed to make way for scraps of miscellaneous lumber. Numerous window sash were missing and all but two windows needed glass. Exterior doors that remained had been defaced with hardware to secure the building.

Planning the restoration of the Keeler House entailed the development of a comprehensive plan that addressed the current situation and needs of the structure. The plan divides the scope of the restoration efforts into six phases: 1) Emergency stabilization of structure; roof, windows doors; 2) Installation of mechanical systems to support occupancy; 3) Structural stabilization; foundation, roof and exterior surfaces; 4) Interior fabric restoration; 5) Landscape control and development; 6) Long-term maintenance and preservation.

To date, phase 1 and 2 have been completed. Phase 3 will address the structural integrity of the building with the removal and replacement of the seriously deteriorated soft brick foundation walls and floor. Replacement of roofing material is scheduled to be implemented upon completion of the foundation, and stabilization of exterior wood surfaces is an on-going process until it can be effectively dealt with. Implementation of phase 3 awaits adequate financing for the largest component of the project. Preservation for phase 3 is underway and involves the relocation of electric lines, plumbing



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Rev. R. W. and Fannie E. Keeler House, Polk County, Iowa

lines and other utilities exposed in the basement. Because deterioration is so severe, the building requires artificial support during the foundation replacement period. Support will be offered with the placement of a network of steel beams placed under the house. The existing foundation will be removed by excavation and new concrete footings will be placed where there are none now. New 10" concrete block walls will provide the estimated 175-ton building adequate support. Implementation of phase 3, structural stabilization, will provide long-term solutions to the diminished structural health of the house.

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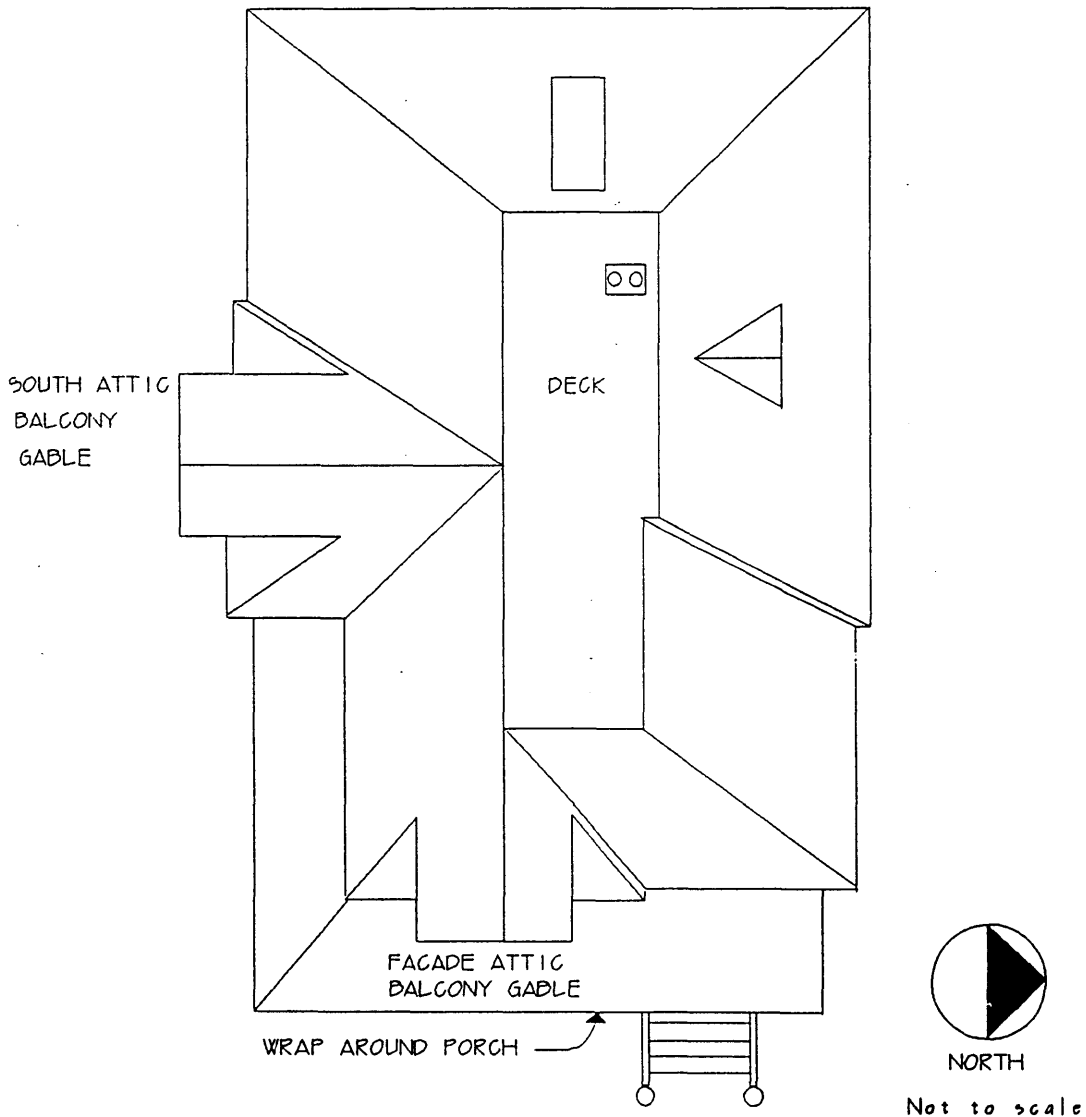
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## PLAN OF ROOF



Drawing by C. Parker Grenz.

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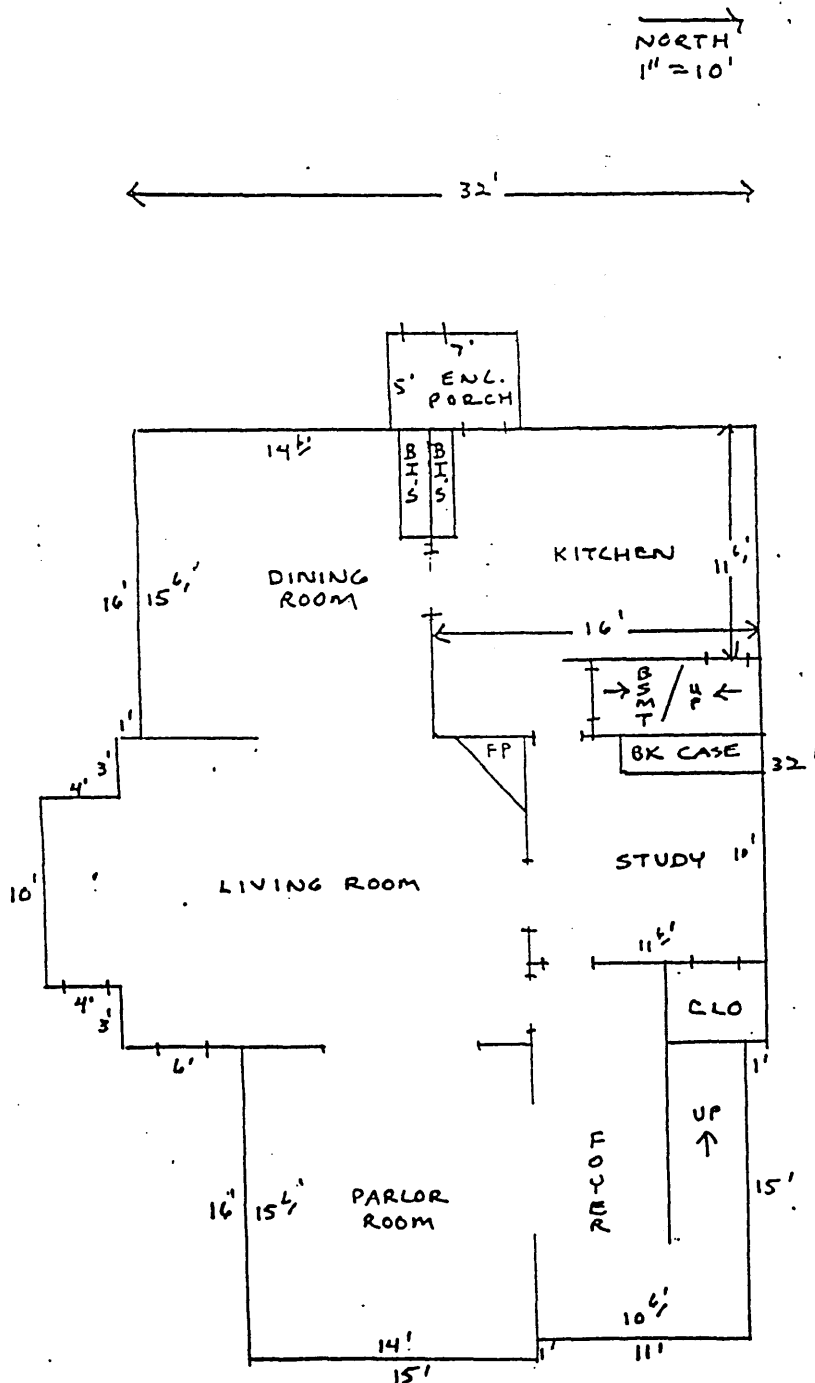
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## FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Drawing by C. Parker Grenz.

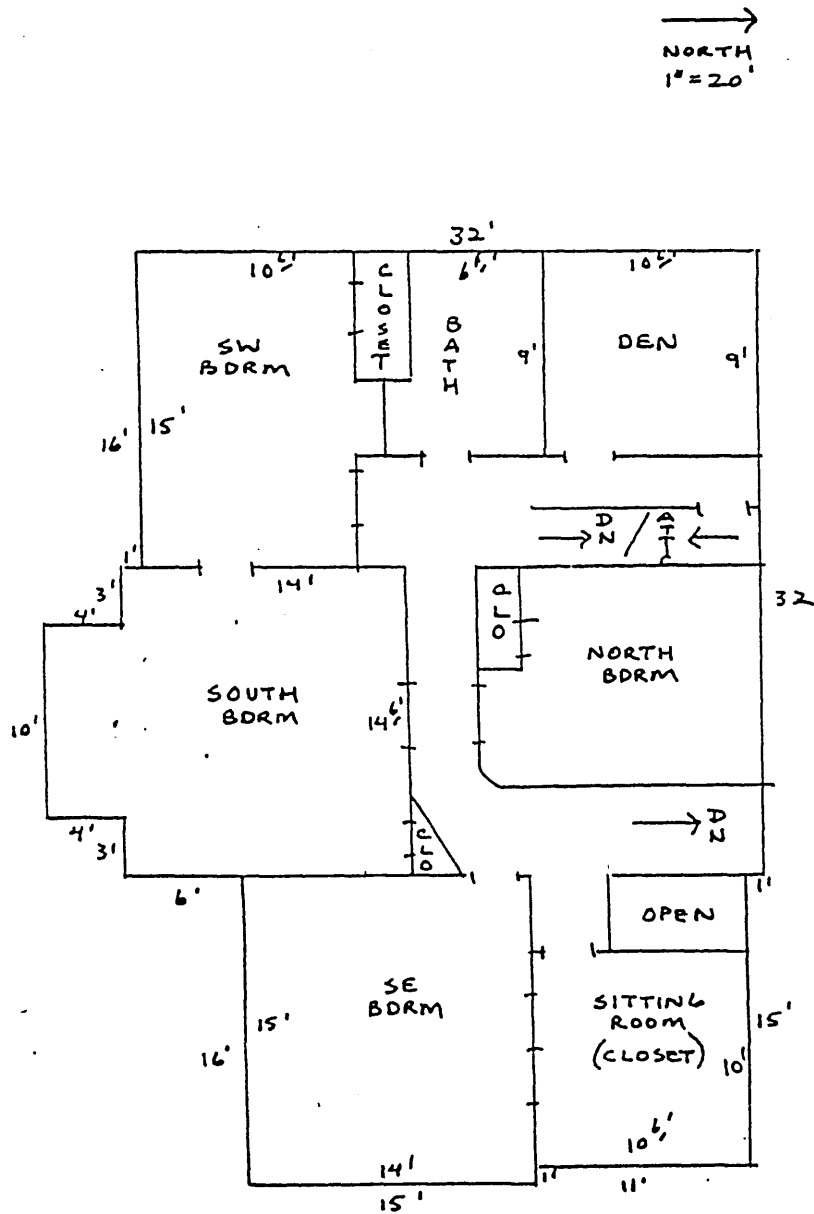
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## CHAMBER FLOOR PLAN



Drawing by C. Parker Grenz.

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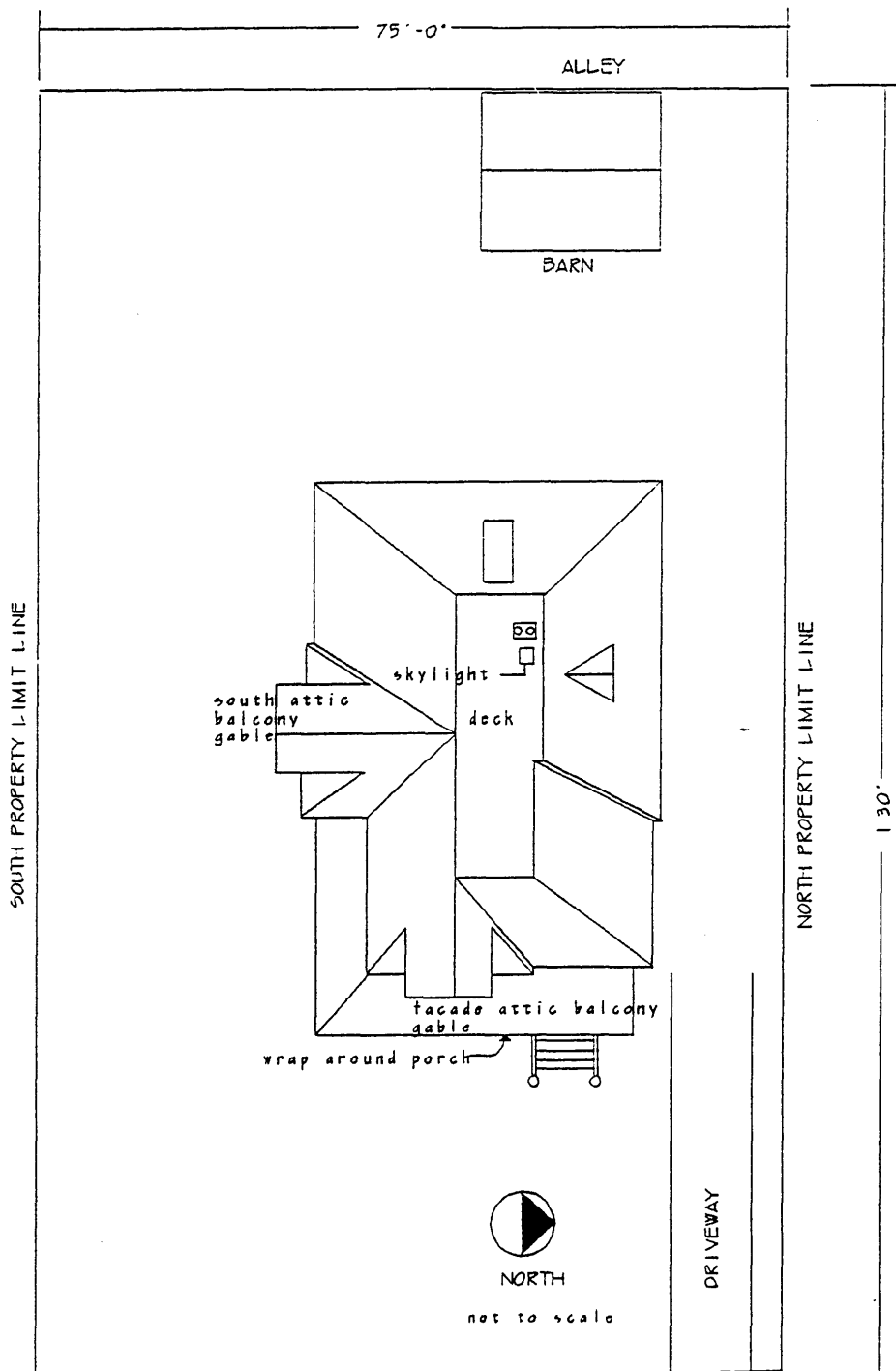
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## SITE PLAN



DRAWING BY C. PARKER GRENZ TENTH STREET

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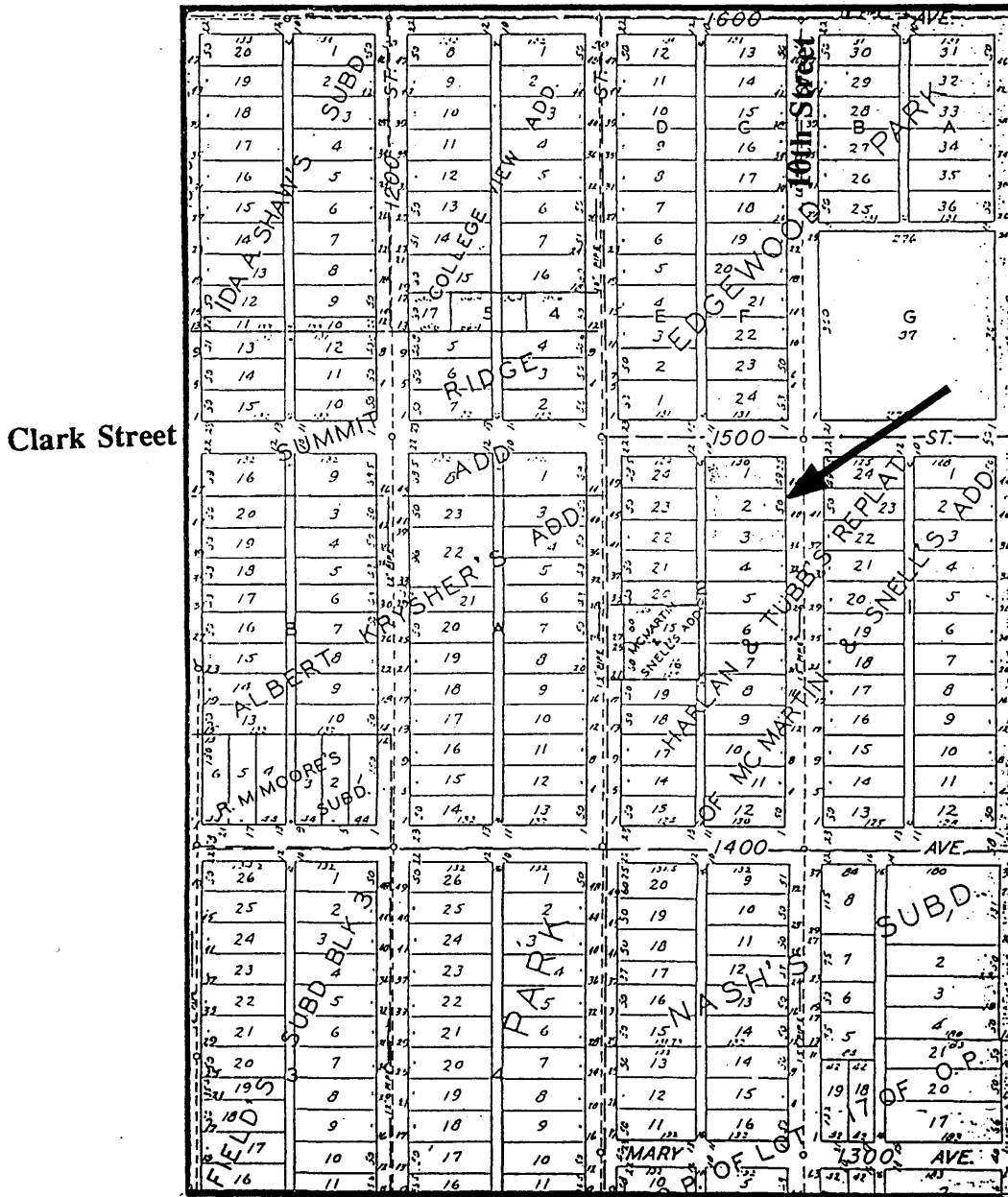
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## NEIGHBORHOOD PLATS



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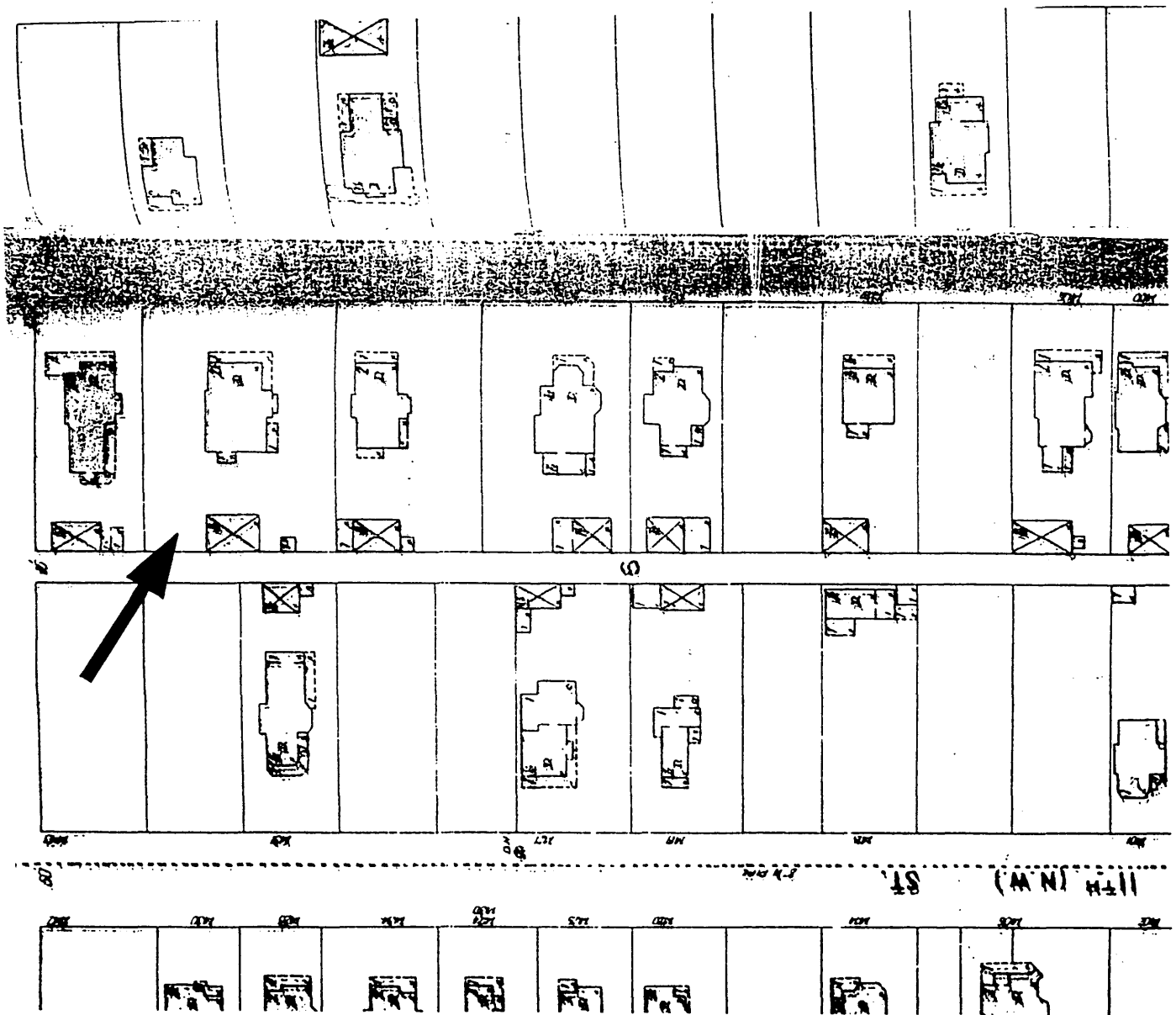
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## 1901 MAP



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for 1901.



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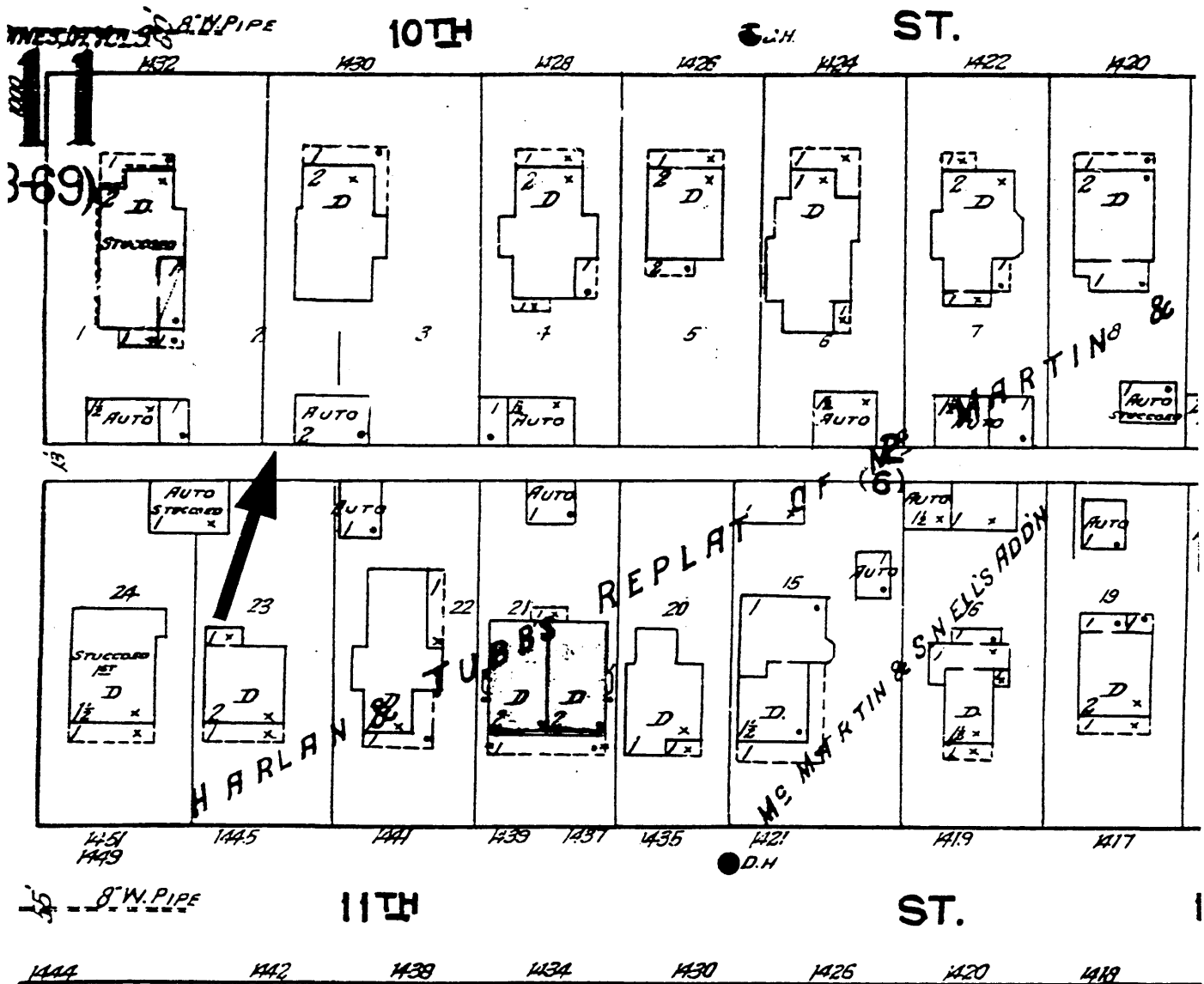
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## 1920 MAP



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for 1920.





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## NONEXTANT EXAMPLE OF ATTIC BALCONY GABLE

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS.



A RARE BARGAIN.

The above cut represents a beautiful home located on Eighth-st north of Washington. It has an east front and is situated in a desirable neighborhood in one of the most lovely residence portions of the city. If purchased within the next thirty days this property may be had at a bargain. Call on or address  
ADAMS & HASTIE, Clapp Block, Des Moines, Iowa.

Unidentified Des Moines Newspaper, Late Nineteenth Century.

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KEELER  
HOUSE  
JSM

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1010-108-1116

Rev. R. W. and Fannie E. Keeler House, Polk County, Iowa

**SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Rev. R. W. and Fannie E. Keeler House is locally significant, under National Register Criterion C, as one of the best extant examples in Des Moines of the Stick Style, particularly the trussed attic balcony gable subtype of that mode. Of the handful of examples of this subtype still standing, the Keeler House is one of only two that are known to retain a high degree of exterior and interior integrity and is the only one with its original front porch. Constructed in 1889 and perhaps earlier, the Keeler House with its Gothic Revival derived trimwork, gable treatment, and complex roof configuration provides an excellent illustration of how that mode influenced the Stick Style. The building, with its rectilinear feeling, also provides a benchmark for comparison of the Stick Style in Des Moines with the subsequent Queen Anne style, which is closely related but generally more curvilinear.

The Keeler House is additionally significant locally, under National Register Criterion C, as the documented work of a local contractor-builder partnership. Constructed by John W. Detwiler and James C. Bedford, the Keeler House calls attention to the role of the contractor-builder in the improvement of Des Moines' early suburbs during the 1880s and 1890s.

Although not claimed here, the Keeler House may also be locally significant, under National Register Criterion A, within the historic context "Real Estate and Suburban Development" as discussed in "Towards a Greater Des Moines: Early Suburbanization and Development, circa 1880-circa 1920," a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In this regard, the Keeler House stands as a documented example of speculative housing constructed during the so-called Lowry Goode Boom in Des Moines. Characterized by rapidly consummated real estate deals, home construction, and intense speculation, this bull market began in the late 1880s and ended with the Panic of 1893. Much of its activity was centered within the City of North Des Moines, and the Keeler House, whose ownership transfers dramatically illustrate the rapidity of real estate deals in this Victorian suburb, calls attention to a prominent manifestation of this bull market.

Abstract of Title data provided the approximately date of the building's construction.

**STICK STYLE**

The Keeler House is significant to the development of Des Moines residential architecture as an outstanding example of the Stick Style in the city and the close relationship between this style and that of the Queen Anne taste. Stick Style is extremely difficult to separate from Queen Anne because their detailing is so similar. The two can best be separated in the way the core structure, or footprint, of the building is treated. In the former, the core is essentially a square or rectangle and stylistic category is defined by its multi-textured wall surfaces and decorative trusses of stickwork in the gables, while in the latter, the footprint is irregular and the visual exuberance of the mode is conveyed as much by asymmetrical form and massing as by decorative detailing.

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Rev. R. W. and Fannie E. Keeler House, Polk County, Iowa

Concerning the Stick Style, architectural historians in Des Moines have observed to date at least two distinctive subtypes of this mode--the canted bay and the trussed attic balcony gable. (There are likely other subtypes as yet undiscovered.)

The canted bay subtype is essentially a long rectangle, capped with either a gabled or truncated hipped roof, and features a distinctive, full height, rectangular-shaped corner bay. At least six examples of this subtype, which was never very numerous in Des Moines, remain. One is a contributing building in the Sherman Hill Historic District (NRHP); two are in the Drake Neighborhood, with one individually listed on the National Register; three are in the River Bend Neighborhood, and one stands on Oak Park Avenue in the Oak Park neighborhood of Des Moines.

The second subtype, the trussed attic balcony gable subtype, is capped with a cross gabled roof, and as a hallmark, features two or more functional balconies or porches within the attic gables. This subtype was apparently more numerous than the canted bay type. Examples stood, historically, along west Grand Avenue and survive today in the Sherman Hill Historic District and River Bend Neighborhood. This example, 1430 - 10th Street also fits into this subtype and is located just outside the River Bend area. There are at least four similar examples of this particular subtype on 8th, 9th, and 10th Streets. Of these five examples (and there are likely others), there are two that are particularly outstanding because of their relatively high degree of integrity, 1724 - 9th Street and 1430 - 10th Street. Both residences retain a high level of interior integrity, including floor plans, original finishes and materials, ornate woodwork and original hardware, and colored art glass windows. The example at 1724 has been clad with cover-up siding. Most of the original siding and detailing material remains, however, and both also retain a large percentage of their decorative trim around windows, roofs, and gables, especially the "Stick work" that is a hallmark of the style. Of the two, 1430 - 10th Street appears to be the only one that has retained a large amount of its original front porch. Based on this survey data, the Keeler House is one of the best examples of this subtype.

As is evident from above, the construction of both subtypes of the Stick Style and the Queen Anne style have very strong association with the development and growth of North Des Moines, an independent suburban city, located directly north of present day downtown, which was platted and developed in the 1880s before being annexed into the City of Des Moines in 1890.

This property retains its barn outbuilding. This structure comprises one of the few surviving examples of an urban barn constructed during the late Nineteenth Century in the City of North Des Moines. Although altered, the presence of this resource calls attention to the general design, location, and size of an ancillary structure and its relationship to the dwelling unit.

**DETWILER-BEDFORD PARTNERSHIP**

The Detwiler-Bedford Partnership provides one local example of a Victorian contractor-builder business. 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

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Rev. R. W. and Fannie E. Keeler House, Polk County, Iowa

this respect, the Detwiler-Bedford construction of the Keeler House provides a significant case study, of speculative housing in Victorian Des Moines. As such, it also calls attention to the role of the contractor-builder in fueling the Lowry Goode boom, an era of great speculative construction in the city, which collapsed in the Panic of 1893.

Prior to World War II, the scale of residential development was small in Des Moines. Contractor-builders typically seem to have acquired several lots and proceeded to construct either speculative or custom built houses on these lots. This practice can be contrasted with residential construction following World War II when the scale of tract home construction was much larger. The role of the contractor-builder is critical in understanding the residential architecture of Des Moines, because homes constructed by these individuals form the core of the city's residential stock.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Detwiler and John Detwiler (whose family relationship is as yet unknown) engaged in building trades and are listed in the 1886-1887 Des Moines city directory as carpenters. Henry lived at 614 Des Moines Street, while John lived at 223 Jefferson in South Des Moines. In the next year, James C. Bedford, living at 928 15th Street, is listed in the city directory. Bedford was employed as a contractor-builder. During the next few years, John and James formed a partnership. In 1889, they purchased land from C. A. Tubbs and J. S. Harlan. In a quick succession of business agreements between the partners, Central Loan and Trust, and R. W. Keeler, the financing of the house at 1430 10th Street was consummated. The title of ownership of this property illustrates the rapid turn-over of land ownership and rife speculation during the 1880s in Des Moines, particularly in the historic boundaries of the City of North Des Moines, the land north to the Des Moines River, and also in Oak Park and Highland Park, on the other side of the Des Moines River.<sup>2</sup>

1.

Unfortunately, until at least the first decades of the Twentieth Century, information about contractor-builders in Des Moines is sketchy. Many of these contractor-builders' names are presently unknown, and insufficient information about this period precludes generalizations about it at this time. It is, nonetheless, safe to say that the number of Des Moines based contractor-builders grew rapidly during the final quarter of the Nineteenth Century. In 1880 there were twenty-four contractor-builders in the city, including S. A. Robertson, with offices at 400-402 5th Avenue, Charles Weitz, located in the alley at the rear of the C.R.I. & P. Railroad Depot, and Conrad Youngerman, at 206 4th Avenue (*Bushnell's Des Moines Residence and Business City Directory*, 1881-1882, p. 91). By 1889 there were at least thirty-one (*Bushnell's Des Moines City Directory*, 1889-90; p. 527).

2

The property on which the Keeler House was built, was purchased in 1881 by D. C. McMartin and Richard Snell. The following year, these two partners laid out McMartin and Snell's Addition in the City of North Des Moines. In 1883, the two partners sold a number of lots in their addition to J. S. Harland, C. A. Tubbs, and W. Warwick. In 1886, Harlan and Tubbs sold a portion of this property to George Beil. In 1887, Harland and Tubbs re-platted McMartin and Snell's Addition to North Des Moines. In 1889, Harlan and Tubbs sold the lots under review to Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Bedford and J. W. Detwiler. Finally, about one month later, the Bedfords and Detwiler sold the property to Rev. Richard W. Keeler. The property remained in the Keeler family's possession until 1964.

Most of the foregoing real estate transactions show that land was developed in a piece-meal fashion, often by small speculators. The Keeler House illustrates one such real estate development.

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**KEELER FAMILY**

Although historical significance for the Keeler House is not claimed for its associations with the Keeler family, the following information is provided for background.

Rev. R(ichard) W. and Fannie E. Keeler

At his death, the Reverend R. W. Keeler was lauded as "one of the most conspicuous figures in the history of Iowa Methodism." The first president of Cornell College, he was considered to be quite significant in the Methodist Episcopal Church Upper Iowa Conference, primarily because he had established numerous congregations throughout the state. Rev. and Mrs. Keeler lived in about 11 different towns in Iowa, the longest time being at Storm Lake, where they also owned property. The couple returned to their house on 10th Street on his retirement in 1895, and it was there that he passed away four years later.

Rev. Keeler was born in Columbia County, New York, in 1824, and died in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1899. His family were Methodists, and Richard joined the church at the age of thirteen. He was an early graduate of Cornell University in New York State. In 1845 he married Fannie (or Fanny) E. Dickerson, whose father, the Reverend J. L. Dickerson, was a member of the New York Conference. Fanny Keeler had a career in the theater prior to her marriage to Richard. Her brother Swearingen was also prominent in the Methodist Church.

Three months after his marriage Richard was accepted into trial membership in the New York Conference. Two years later he was ordained a deacon of the church, which signified his acceptance into full-time ministry. After another two years, he was ordained an elder of the church, which meant that his period of probation had ended, and he was accepted as a permanent, full-time pastor, similar to a professor being granted tenure.

The Methodist Episcopal Church is founded on the principle of the "circuit rider ministry," which means that pastors are expected to travel extensively and change stations often. Keeler's career serves as a fine example of this lifestyle. His first eleven years in the ministry were spent in the New York Conference. After that he was transferred to the young church in Iowa, where, in 1856, he became an original member of the Upper Iowa Conference upon its organization. After briefly serving as pastor of First Church in Davenport, he was appointed to be the first president of Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, where he presided at its first commencement in 1859. Shortly afterward, he resigned as president to become principal of Epworth Seminary. He remained at the seminary until 1864, when he was appointed Presiding Elder of the Davenport District.

In 1868, Keeler returned to full-time ministry, and his movements from place to place accelerated. He first accepted a pastorate in Cedar Falls. In 1871, he returned to serve another church in Davenport. Two years later he returned to administration, becoming Presiding Elder of the Charles City District.

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From 1876 to 1880 he served the Dubuque District. In 1880 he returned to the pastorate, this time in Fayette. In 1882, he was stationed in Toledo. Two years later he became Dean of Theology at Central Tennessee College, founded to educate black freedmen. In 1890, he returned to Iowa and was appointed a pastor in Dyersville. Two years later he was made a lecturer at Upper Iowa University, where he remained until his retirement in 1895.

In addition to the duties required by these positions, Keeler often served his church in administrative appointments or as a delegate representing his conference at General Conferences, or meetings of the leaders of the church on the national level. His frequent selection for such posts illustrates the high esteem in which he was held by his colleagues in the ministry. Keeler also received the distinction of seeing the church publish several of his sermons in anniversary publications and receiving a doctor of divinity degree.

Shortly before his retirement, in November 1889, the Keelers purchased the residence at 1430 - 10th Street in Des Moines to be near their children, all but one of whom lived in the capital city. This would be their permanent home, although Richard would still accept posts in other parts of the state until his retirement. The Keelers also maintained a summer residence in Clear Lake from about 1891, according to the Des Moines City Directory of that year.<sup>3</sup>

### POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Although the site's potential for archaeological research is, as yet, unevaluated, there appears to be little in this regard, because it was probably the first building constructed on the site. The possibility exists, however, to discover the archaeological remains of early outbuildings associated with the house. These include a privy, which stood about 12' south of the barn, and a lean-to attached to the barn.

3.

The Keelers' children included:

#### C(ecil) M. Keeler

C. M. was active in local musical organizations. He sang in the Iowa YMCA Male Quartette, and the 40-member male chorus of the Apollo Club, of which he was a member of the Executive Committee. Keeler also participated for several years in the Des Moines Vocal Society, along with his brother and J. B. Weaver, Jr., son of the U. S. Presidential candidate.

C. M. inherited the Keeler House, where he continued to live until his death. His widow held title to the property until her death. Loo Loo Page, a niece of Mrs. C. M. Keeler, then inherited the building. She lived there until her death in 1964. At that time, Henry C. Borzo bought the property from her estate and continued to live in the building until his death in 1988. After about one' year's vacancy, the building was purchased in May 1990 by the current owners.

#### C(halres) L. Keeler

Like his brother, Cl. L. participated actively in local musical groups, such as the Des Moines Vocal Society. C. L. practiced dentistry, maintaining his offices in the attic of the Keeler House. A wooden "Dentist" sign remains in the house today.

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**Directory of photographs:**

- 1 A; EAST FACADE as viewed West
- 2 A; NORTHEAST VIEW includes view of nonextant side-porch. Close examination reveals "paint lines" of porch roof (within the middle, horizontal band of vertical siding).
- 3 A; SOUTH VIEW as looking South.
- 4 A; NORTH VIEW shows attic gable balconies.
- 5 A; FIREPLACE

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