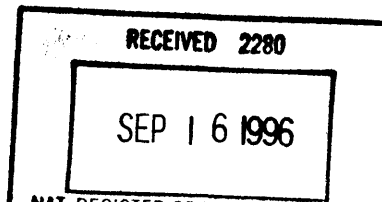


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" on the appropriate line or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name KROMER FLATS
other names/site number DRUMMOND APARTMENTS; THE DRUMMOND

2. Location

street & number 1433-1439 6th Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Des Moines N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50314

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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.)
Judicia Ostrinski DSH/PD 9-12-96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State Historical Society of Iowa
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property (meets does not meet) the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is :
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet
 - determined not eligible for the National Register
 - removed from the National Register.
 - Other, (Explain)

Edson W. Beall Signature of Keeper Date of Action 10-25-96

Kromer Flats
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many lines as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one line)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Towards a Greater Des Moines

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Italian Renaissance

foundation Tile

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Glass

Narrative Description

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

Kromer Flats
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" on one or more lines for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" on all the lines that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
TRANSPORTATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1904-1905

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Liebe, Nourse & Rasmussen, architects

Narrative Statement of Significance - (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliography References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- previous determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Record
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historical Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository

Kromer Flats
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 15 | 47 | 900 | 46 | 05 | 865 |

Zone Easting Northing

2 | | | | | | |

Zone Easting Northing

3 | | | | | | |

Zone Easting Northing

4 | | | | | | |

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William C. Page, Public Historian

organization River Bend Neighborhood Association date March 31, 1995

street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue telephone 515-243-5740; FAX 515-243-7285

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 Sixth Avenue Apartment Invest., L. P.

street & number 1251 University Avenue, Suite E telephone 515-244-8308

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50314

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This is a 2-1/2 story, multi-family dwelling of balloon frame construction clad with brick veneer. Built between 1904 and 1905, the Kromer Flats feature a warm-colored orange-yellow brick with cast concrete trim. A series of open and enclosed 2-story porches is located at the rear of the building.

APARTMENT BUILDING

The main portion of the building measures approximately 92' x 52' (width by depth). Although rectangular in shape, the building is constructed so that three air shafts are situated in the rear elevation to provide exterior facing for light and air (see Continuation Sheet 7-6). A 2' x 10' bay is situated within the central air shaft for each of the apartments abutting it. This air shaft measures approximately 10' x 35', while the flanking air shafts are smaller, measuring about 5' 13'. The interior most portion of these air shafts is wedge-shaped (see Continuation Sheet 7-6). The building also features two other bays, each measuring 2' x 10'. One is located on the south elevation and the other is located on the north elevation. Four oriel windows are situated on the second floor of the facade. Each contains a series of three windows. Windows are generally of 1/1 double hung sash configuration. Windows on the first floor are paired, while they are placed singly on the second floor.

Cast concrete trim embellishes the facade of the building. This includes a belt course between the second and attic stories, window sills, a keystone over the central arched entryway, and piers supporting that entryway. Other architectural details include horizontal bands worked in brick on the first floor and a cornice which caps the facade.

Each of the building's two principal floors contains approximately 4,433 square feet. Each floor originally contained four apartments.

The building rests on a brick foundation. Of balloon frame construction, the building is clad with a warm yellow-colored brick. Cast stone trimwork decorates the facade, including keystones. The building is covered with a flat roof of composition materials. A full basement stands beneath the building. It features a poured concrete floor and eight foot ceilings. Basement walls are unfinished.

On the interior, Floor 1 and Floor 2 feature hardwood floors. Walls are clad with plaster surfaces. While the apartments on Floor 1 possess ten foot ceilings, those on the second floor have twelve foot ceilings.

Overall this apartment building is in fair condition. It is currently unoccupied. During the summer of 1995, some windows were removed from it so that air circulation could dry out its interior. An investment group has purchased this building with the intention of rehabilitating it for low-income housing. The architect's drawings, shown on Continuation Sheets 7-7 through 7-9, show preliminary designs for this project.

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Section number 7

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CFN-259-1116

Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

SITE

This building is situated on Lot 20 and Lot 22 in Block 2 of Hedges Addition to the City of Des Moines. Together, these lots measure 100' x 124'.

Three lots to the south of this property, an alley runs east and west. The 6th and Forest Avenue Historic District stands south of this alley. In other words, the immediate surroundings of the Kromer Flats are of mixed land use.

The immediate site of this property is generally level in topography. About four blocks to the north, 6th Avenue slopes steeply downward into the Des Moines River valley. About two blocks south, 6th Avenue slopes into the floodplain of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers, where downtown Des Moines is located.

The visual impression of 6th Avenue all along this course is that of an area densely built. Although many single-family dwellings occupied this portion of 6th Avenue in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, only a few remain. Most city lots have been redeveloped for commercial or multi-family purposes. As a four-lane artery into downtown Des Moines from the north, 6th Avenue carries heavy traffic. Land use to the west and to the east of the site remains residential, most of which is in single-family dwellings.

The Des Moines City Assessor's Office describes this site as within a "blighted area." The federal Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) has designated this neighborhood as "slum blight."

United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

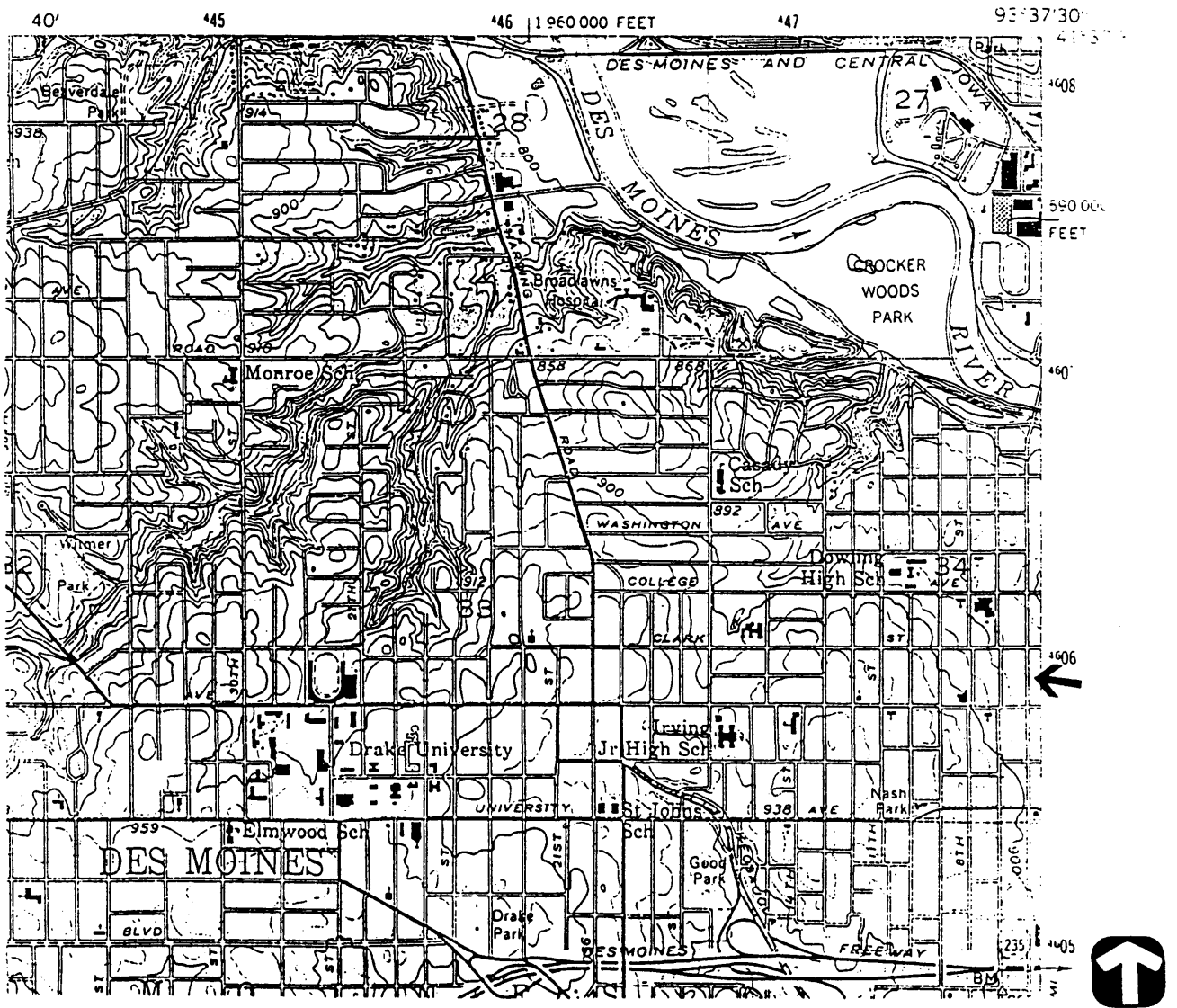
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Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

SITE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



Source: U.S.G.S. Map (7.5 Minute Series), Des Moines SW Quadrangle, 1956, Photorevised 1976.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

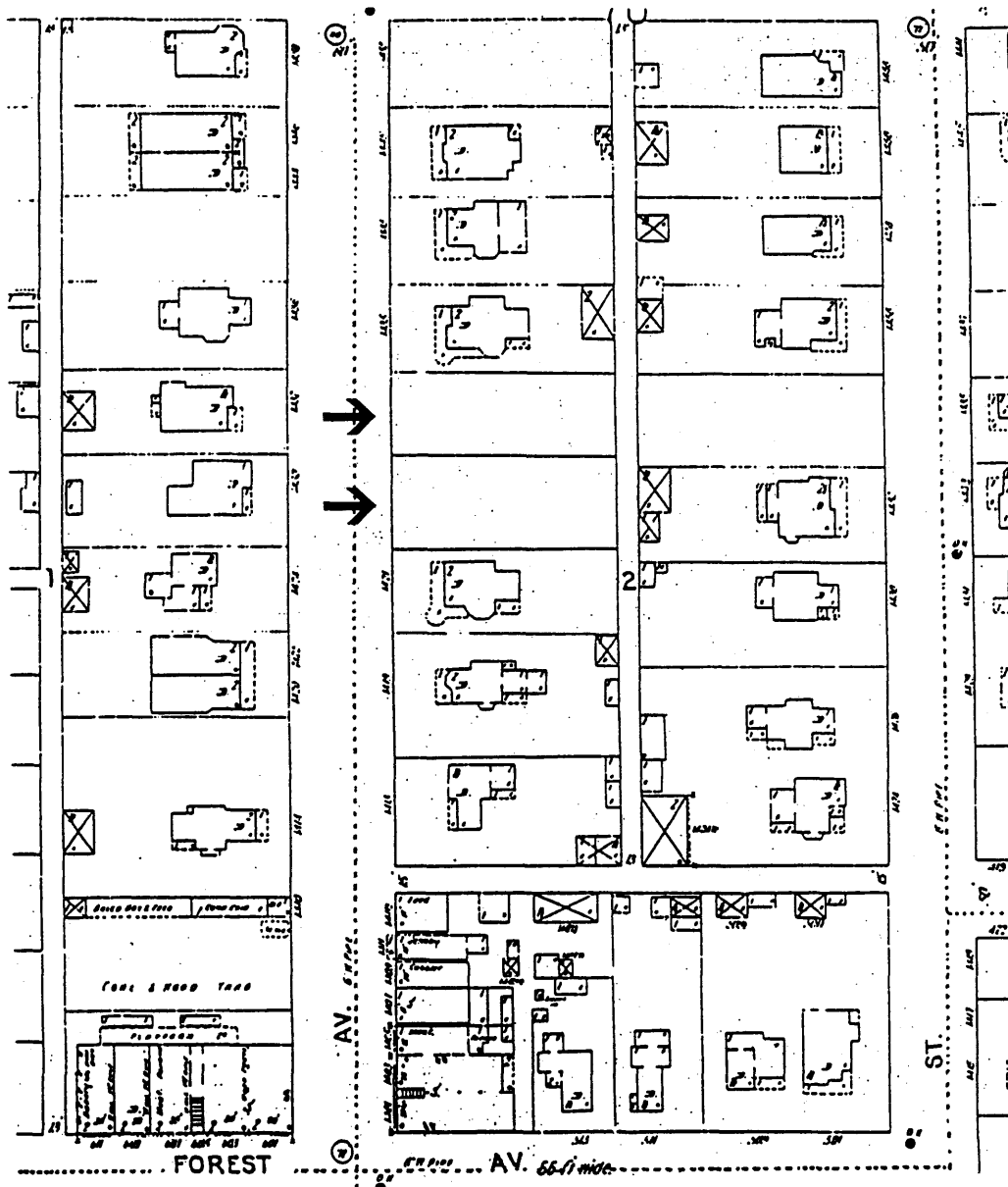
Section number 7 Page 4

CFN-259-1116

Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

1901 PLAT MAP

ARROW LOCATES VACANT PROPERTY



United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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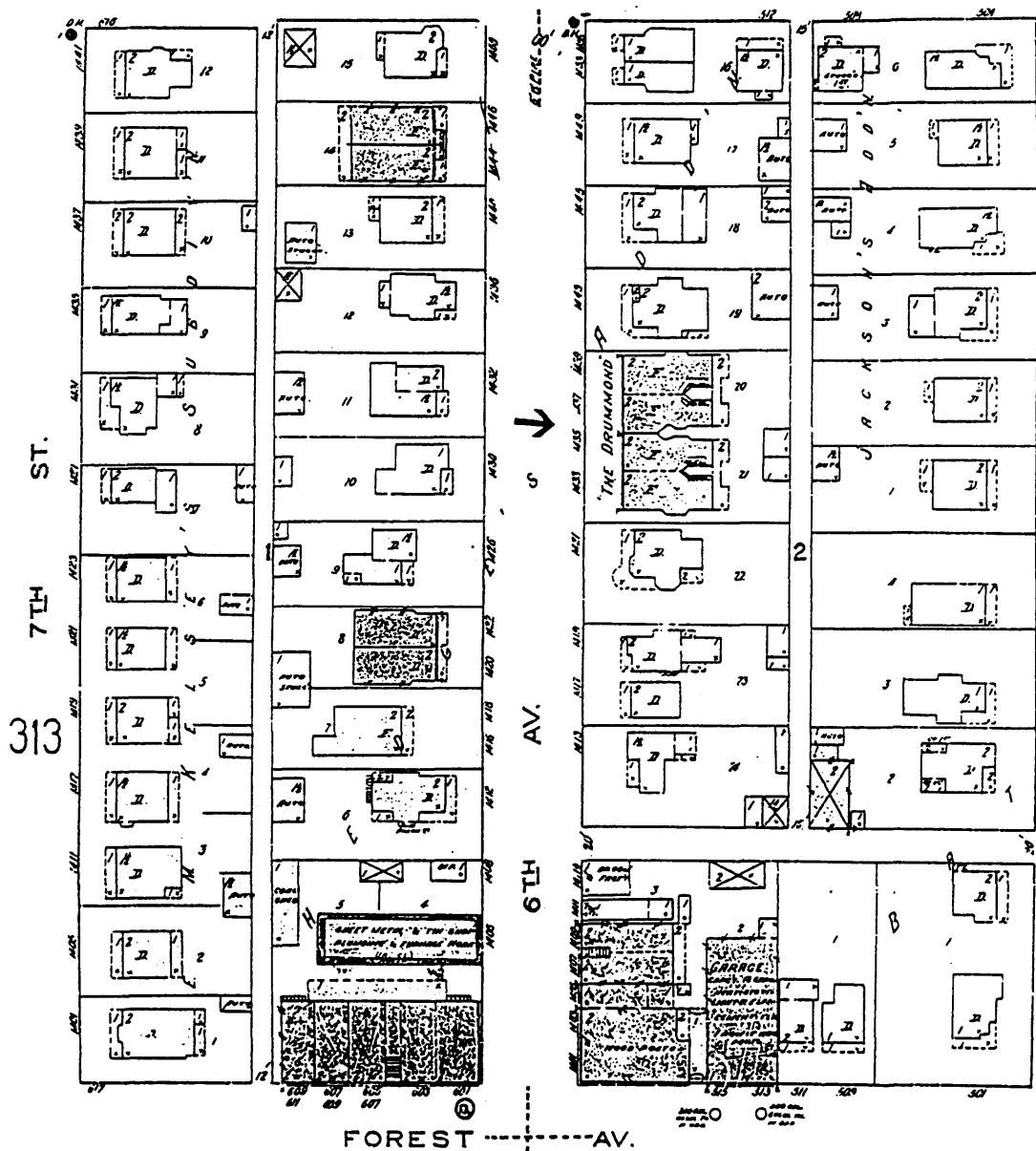
CFN-259-1116

Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

1920 PLAT MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY

CLARK



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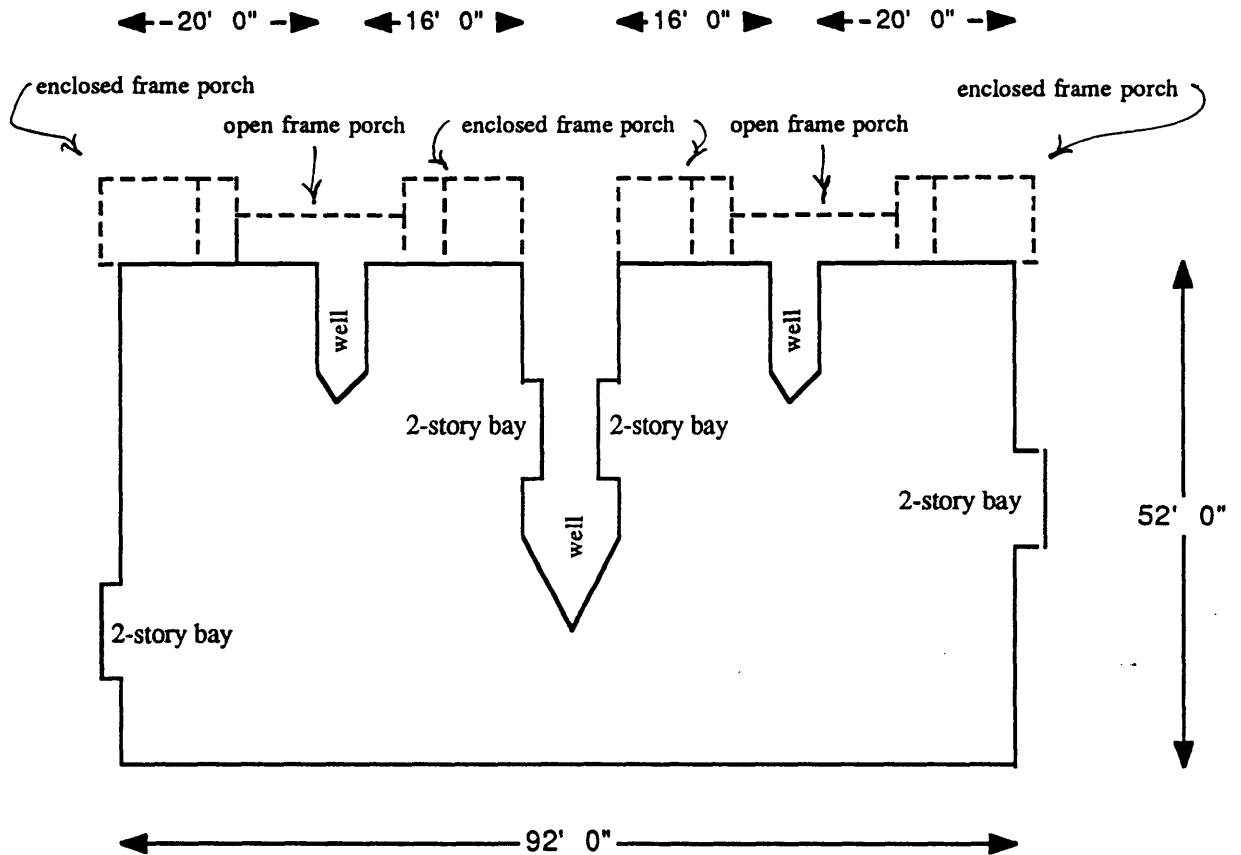
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Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

BUILDING FOOTPRINT



Computer Drawing by William C. Page, Public Historian.

Measurements: Des Moines City Assessor Office Property Record Card.

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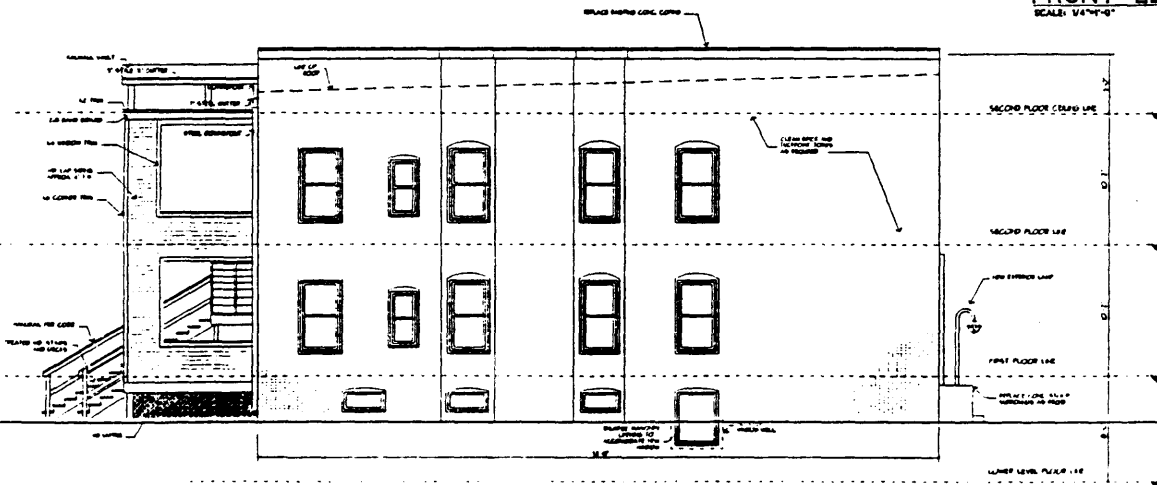
CFN-259-1116

Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

FRONT AND NORTH ELEVATIONS



FRONT ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"



NOTE:
 1. MATERIAL ALL EXPOSED
 BRICK TO MAINTAIN
 APPEARANCE
 2. REPAIR ALL BRICK JOINTS
 AS REQUIRED
 3. VERIFY ALL MEASUREMENTS AND
 OPENING SIZES ON SITE
 BEFORE ORDERING WINDOWS AND DOORS

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

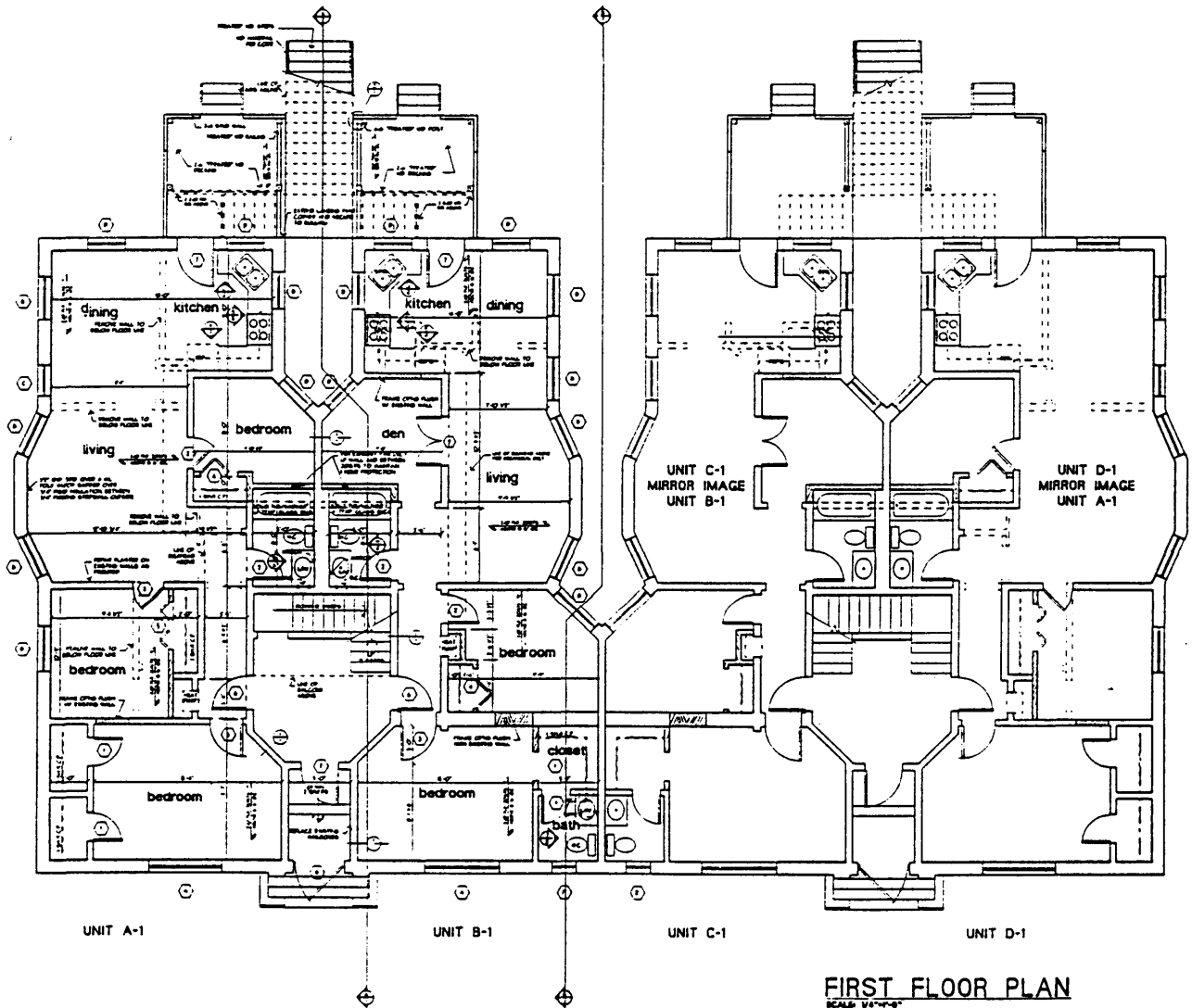
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Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN



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Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built between 1904 and 1905 as a multiple-family dwelling, the Kromer Flats possess historical significance, under National Register Criterion A, in calling attention to the evolution of 6th Avenue as a transportation corridor and the resultant land development and redevelopment which that phenomenon affected along its course. By the turn of the Twentieth Century, 6th Avenue had emerged as a major streetcar and vehicular route in Des Moines. Constructed in a city block then occupied exclusively by single-family dwellings, the Kromer Flats illustrate how proximity to such routes encouraged the development of land into higher residential use, an important community development pattern in Des Moines' history.

The Kromer Flats are additionally significant under National Register Criterion C. As the documented design of Des Moines architects Liebke, Nourse & Rasmussen, they call attention to the considerable skills of that firm. The Kromer Flats also illustrate a clever solution to the difficult problem of providing light and air to residential units within an apartment block. A series of three air shafts are situated on the east elevation to provide additional air and light to the building's interior. The Kromer Flats are additionally significant, under Criterion C, because of their architectural style. Exhibiting the influence of the Twentieth Century Revival Italian Renaissance taste, the building illustrates how that mode could be applied to an apartment building. The symmetrical design of the facade, contrast between textured first floor and smooth upper floor wall surfaces, and attic story windows are diagnostic characteristics of this influence.

The period of significance, under Criterion A, for the Kromer Flats is 1904 to 1905, the years in which 6th Avenue as a transportation corridor affected land development on this site. The period of significance, under Criterion C, is 1905, the year the building was completed.

The property contains one contributing resource for this nomination--the apartment building itself.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The development and redevelopment of land into ever higher uses illustrates how rapid public transportation affected community development in the metropolitan area of Des Moines. North Des Moines provides an outstanding example of such a streetcar suburb, whose growth stemmed largely from this phenomenon. The evolution of residential property types along 6th Avenue--a principle streetcar route in the area--provides a dramatic illustration. On some sites, first generation single-family dwellings (themselves indebted to the streetcar for their birth), gave way to double houses. Other sites were later redeveloped as apartment buildings. Finally, in one case, an entire city block was redeveloped into an apartment complex of seven buildings.

Already by 1890, electric-powered streetcar service provided public transportation to North Des Moines along 6th Avenue. Additional service was also provided by horse-drawn streetcars along 9th Street. Somewhat later, 2nd Avenue became a third streetcar route in the area, crossing the Des Moines River at that street to link Highland Park in the north to points south of the river and

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Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

downtown. In the downtown itself, the intersection of 6th Avenue and Locust Street had emerged during this period as the principal crossroads of the city's central business district. Construction in the 1890s of the Equitable Life Assurance building (later known as the Bankers Trust Building) on the northwest corner of that intersection guaranteed its status as a major arterial crossroads. For all these reasons, 6th Avenue was perceived as a major street in the city.

Considerable construction of first-generation housing occurred along 6th Avenue in North Des Moines. Already in 1891, for example, plats were sufficiently developed in the area to be mapped by the Sanborn-Perris Map Company. The level of this residential construction warranted more maps than any other of the city's suburbs. That company's 1901 map of the city reinforces this generalization. It also shows how most of the residential dwellings along 6th Avenue were single-family. The map also indicates, however, an appreciable number of double houses. By 1920, the number of double houses had increased, according to the Sanborn for that year. Construction of major apartment buildings had also taken place--at 1245 6th Avenue (New Lawn Apartment), 1443-1449 6th Avenue (Kromer Flats), 2635 6th Avenue (The Maine), and 1815 6th Avenue (The Ayrshire). Within this historic context, the Kromer Flats are significant because its construction in 1904-1905 illustrates one step in this evolution.

The Kromer Flats were erected by Edward M. Kromer. He owned and operated the Kromer Dancing Academy in Des Moines during the early Twentieth Century and resided in the Kromer Flats. The Kromers of Des Moines made music as an occupation. In 1905, for example, Max J. Kromer was leader of Kromers Orchestra and operated the Kromer Conservatory of Music. The 1908 city directory lists Otto A. Kromer as a musician. In selecting an architectural firm to design his apartment building headed by Henry F. Liebbe, a German subject by birth, Edward M. Kromer may have shown preference to a Germanic heritage of his own.

ARCHITECTURE

The Kromer Flats are architecturally significant because they illustrates a new building type in North Des Moines, because they call attention to the architectural firm of Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen, and because they show how the Italian Renaissance style, as revived in the early Twentieth Century, could influence the design of a large building.

Apartment Building

The Kromer Flats stand as a fine and early example of a new type of residential architecture emerging in North Des Moines during the early Twentieth Century--the apartment building. The apartment building was distinct in many ways from earlier kinds of multi-family dwellings. Prior to the apartment building, most suburban multi-family dwelling units were located on the upper floor or floors of commercial establishments.

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Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

The apartment building differed from commercial block dwellings in several significant ways. The floor plan of commercial block dwelling units was generally restricted to the footprint of the first floor's commercial function. In contrast, the apartment was exclusively residential and its design more flexible as a result. The apartment building also possessed amenities usually lacking in storefront units. Because it offered distinctive amenities such as these, the apartment building soon became an alternate to the single-family dwelling and other types of residential architecture in Des Moines.

As additional culture resources surveys gather information about apartment buildings in Des Moines, it will become clearer how the "dumb-bell" or "H" shaped configuration of the New Lawn relates to other examples of this format in Des Moines. Connections between these buildings and the evolution of the dumb-bell tenement house in New York City should also be studied and analyzed.

Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen

The Kromer Flats illustrate the considerable architectural skills of the firm Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen. Specifically, this edifice illustrates the preference of this firm for monumental form, light colored building materials, and subtle contrasts of textures.

Henry F. Liebbe was born in Germany, trained in the firm of William Foster of Des Moines (Shank:59). By 1904, had become "State Architect" (Brigham:I-386). At least three buildings in North Des Moines designed by Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen have been identified to date. They include the H. B. Wyman House at 1961 Arlington Avenue, the George H. France House at 410 Franklin Avenue, and the Kromer Flats. Working independently, C. C. Nourse is credited with the design of nonextant portions of Old North Des Moines High School. It is thought that many more buildings by this firm were designed and constructed in North Des Moines.

Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen is a little studied architectural firm. As chief architect for the Iowa State Board of Control, Liebbe concentrated much of his effort on public commissions. It is thought that Nourse and Rasmussen were responsible for much of the firm's other work. The State Historical Society of Iowa curates information about this firm gathered by Neal Vogel. These materials provide a beginning point for research on the firm.

The facade of the Kromer Flats is monumental in form and tightly organized. The first floor, with its Classically inspired suggestion of stone, provides a solid base for the upper floors. The solid feeling of this first floor is further strengthened by the two massive arches, which form the building's principal entrances. The projecting volumes of the oriel windows on the second floor are kept in careful check with the facade line of the building. These windows emerge and recede organically from that line without breaking with it--quite different from the oriel window's usual treatment as a delicate confection.

Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen employed a warm colored orange-yellow brick as exterior wall material to lighten this sober composition. In the selection of a light-colored brick, the firm showed a preference also evident in the George H. France House at 410 Franklin Avenue. This massive

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Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

American Four Square house, with its Prairie School influences, is also relieved by light colored building materials.

It is hoped that further research will flesh out the Northern European and Scandinavian roots of this architectural firm's partners. Their predilection for architectural designs of massive form shows an affinity to a similar traditions in Northern Europe and Scandinavia.

Style

The Kromer Flats is a significant example of architecture influenced by the early Twentieth Century revival of the Italian Renaissance taste. It stands as the best example of this influence on an apartment building in North Des Moines. This influence can be seen in the symmetrical configuration of bays on the facade, the brickwork on its lower level suggesting a classically-inspired, rusticated stone ground floor, the smooth mortar joints of the upper levels of contrasting texture, and the attic story with small windows. Worked in brick and trimmed in cast concrete, the massive scale of the entrance arches and their supporting piers further lend the feeling of a classically-inspired first floor arcade to the building. The large, single-light window sashes present a clean and unobtrusive appearance to the building and can be contrasted, for example, with the highly embellished fenestration of the Prairie School-influenced New Lawn apartment building at 1245 6th Avenue.

REPRESENTATION IN OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS

This apartment building was surveyed in 1994 as part of the "Towards a Greater Des Moines" reconnaissance survey of Des Moines' Victorian suburbs. As one resource within the intensive survey of the River Bend neighborhood, (another part of this project), this building was evaluated as individually eligible, under Criterion C, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The State Historical Society of Iowa concurred in this determination.

POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Although the site's potential for archaeological research is, as yet, unevaluated, there appears to be little if any in this regard.

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Section number 9 Page 14

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Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please refer to Section I of the Multiple Property Documentation Form for complete bibliography.

PRIMARY

Des Moines City Directories for 1903, 1905, 1908.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for 1901 and 1920.

Midwestern, The; October, 1906, Volume 1, #2. This issue identifies Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen as architects of the Kromer Flats.

SECONDARY

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Shank, Wesley I.; *The Iowa Catalog: Historic American Buildings Survey*; Iowa City: University of Iowa Press; 1979.

Vogel, Neal; Research materials on file; Community Programs Bureau of the State Historical Society of Iowa; Des Moines, Iowa.

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National Park Service

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10 Page 15

CFN-259-1116

Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 20 and Lot 21 in Hedges Addition to the City of Des Moines, Iowa.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

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

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 16

CFN-259-1116

Kromer Flats, Polk County, Iowa.

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Kromer Flats
1433-1439 6th Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50314
Looking southeast
William C. Page, Photographer
November 23, 1995

2. Kromer Flats
1433-1439 6th Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50314
Looking northeast
William C. Page, Photographer
November 23, 1995

3. Kromer Flats
1433-1439 6th Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50314
Looking west
William C. Page, Photographer
November 23, 1995