

Attachment #1

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

An Element of Des Moines' Comprehensive Plan

Roll Call #1872, May 16, 1994

CITY OF DES MOINES

**Community Development Department
Planning and Urban Design Division**

with

The Advisory Committee for the Community Preservation Plan

This project has been funded with the assistance of a matching grant-in-kind agreement from the State Historical Society of Iowa, Historic Preservation Bureau, through the Department of the Interior National Park Services under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of the Interior.

2 Double Houses & Row Houses: Affordable Housing

Double houses were common in much of early Des Moines from the 1880s until approximately 1908. They were urban dwellings built within the central city—rarely in the western suburbs of the 1880s.

They tended to be of modest scale, located near other double houses and row houses. Those few double houses built in the western suburbs after 1908 were generally larger and of a more ornate style.

A review of early fire insurance maps show concentrations of double houses in Sherman Hill to Grand Avenue and north of Grand Avenue from the river west.

On the east side, double houses were prevalent near the State Capitol building. The west side suburban communities of Greenwood Park and University Place showed little interest in double houses.

Construction of double houses came to a standstill by 1908 as apartment houses and small private homes were being built. Double houses or “duplexes” reappeared during the Depression.

Modern zoning laws have limited areas of duplex construction, so duplexes are clustered while the older double houses were more scattered about individually.

Duplexes are usually simpler than early double houses. Since the periods of construction and the styles are so different using the terms “double houses” and “duplexes” provides a useful distinction in assessing multi-family dwellings.

The first double house in Des Moines was reported in the *Register* on August 21, 1877. Under the title “Handsome Houses,” it reported that Conrad Youngerman, a major downtown builder, had constructed a two-story asbestine stone double house, elegantly furnished with bathrooms for each bedroom, hot and cold running water, gas lights and steam heat. Mr. Youngerman was to occupy

one of these “elegant houses”.

A preliminary review of the county records and city directories for three extant double houses suggest that owner occupancy for double houses was common. A pattern emerges for a widow to sell a larger single-family house and then build a double house to provide rental income.

1993 Survey

A reconnaissance survey of existing double houses was completed in 1993 by consultant John Zeller that found approximately 90 such structures standing.

To gather initial information on double houses, he first reviewed the 1884, 1891, and 1901 Sanborn maps. He then reviewed the 1920 Sanborn maps, which were updated in the early 1950s, to get an idea of number, location, and size of double houses.

Lastly, he toured the neighborhoods to determine the number of extant properties and photographed each remaining structure.

The survey showed that the architectural styles of double houses correlate with their geographic location. This may be because the architectural style of double houses varied by decade.

Possible ties to ethnic groups may also contribute to differences in architectural style. Many of these structures existed in areas such as the Scandinavian settlement on the east side.

A typical double-house style on the east side employs separate porches on the corners with the vestibules at the center. Matching decorative windows are generally used on the vestibules.

In a majority of cases, double houses in Des Moines show symmetrical massing. However, a few are asymmetrical or employ different architectural styles on either side. In Sherman Hill, for instance, there are five examples of a style employing a broad front porch, clerestory windows, a simple cornice and Roman-style leaded windows.

ROW HOUSES

The existence of row houses in Des Moines in the middle 1870s indicates an early urban character to the city in spite of an abundance of available land. Row houses were built exclusively in the central downtown area. The earliest, Chestnut Row, ran from 4th to 6th streets along Chestnut St. (Keosauqua Way), and was the largest. Other row houses were built later near 13th Street and Grand Avenue, and on Park Street between 3rd and 4th Streets. East side row houses faced the east facade of the State Capitol Building.

Chestnut Row was initially an upscale residential area but fell rapidly in status. Row houses built in the 1870s on Pelton Avenue and 4th Street



Row House residence, 1880, 733-35 19th Street

in the notorious White Chapel red-light district (earlier called Scribner's Row) fell into a state of disrepair soon after their construction.

Today, only a few remnants of row houses are left. One of the best surviving is the Wetherell and Ericsson architect office at 1106 High Street.

In spite of the present-day scarcity of row houses, a study of this style will help to generate a greater public understanding of the urban character of early Des Moines. Most people did not live in a private home provided with a stable for a horse and buggy that would accord them the kind of personal freedom now associated with an automobile. Early residents relied on public transportation and walking to get about. They lived closer to their jobs in neighborhoods more densely settled than neighborhoods today.

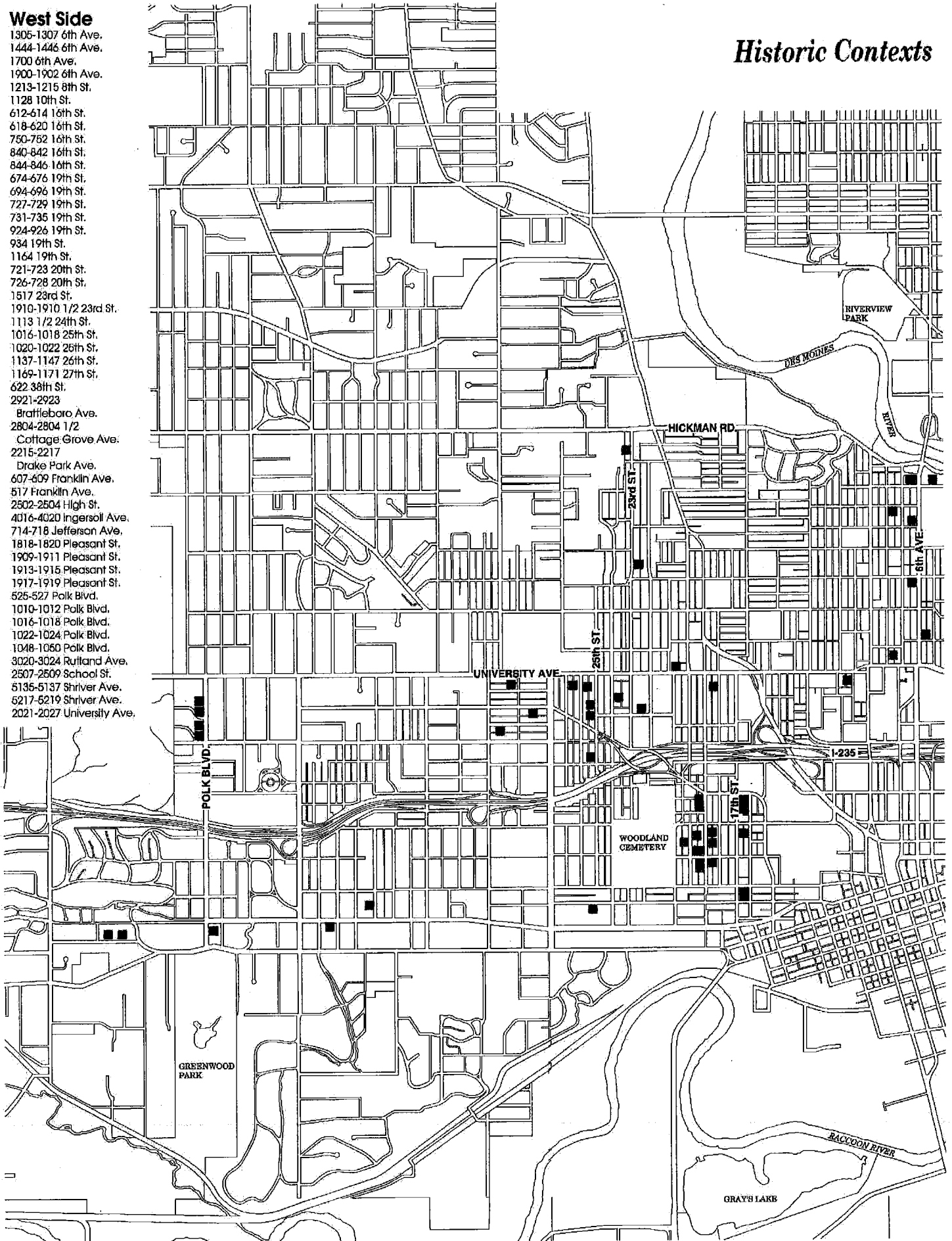
Double house, 525-527 Polk Boulevard (opposite top)

Double house in Sherman Hill (opposite bottom)

West Side

1305-1307 6th Ave.
1444-1446 6th Ave.
1700 6th Ave.
1900-1902 6th Ave.
1213-1215 8th St.
1128 10th St.
612-614 16th St.
618-620 16th St.
750-752 16th St.
840-842 16th St.
844-846 16th St.
674-676 19th St.
694-696 19th St.
727-729 19th St.
731-735 19th St.
924-926 19th St.
934 19th St.
1164 19th St.
721-723 20th St.
726-728 20th St.
1517 23rd St.
1910-1910 1/2 23rd St.
1113 1/2 24th St.
1016-1018 25th St.
1020-1022 25th St.
1137-1147 26th St.
1169-1171 27th St.
622 38th St.
2921-2923
Bafflebaro Ave.
2804-2804 1/2
Cottage Grove Ave.
2215-2217
Drake Park Ave.
607-609 Franklin Ave.
517 Franklin Ave.
2502-2504 High St.
4016-4020 Ingersoll Ave.
714-718 Jefferson Ave.
1818-1820 Pleasant St.
1909-1911 Pleasant St.
1913-1915 Pleasant St.
1917-1919 Pleasant St.
525-527 Polk Blvd.
1010-1012 Polk Blvd.
1016-1018 Polk Blvd.
1022-1024 Polk Blvd.
1048-1050 Polk Blvd.
3020-3024 Rutland Ave.
2507-2509 School St.
5135-5137 Shriver Ave.
5217-5219 Shriver Ave.
2021-2027 University Ave.

Historic Contexts



History of Preservation in Des Moines

This chapter includes listings of architecturally and historically important properties and events.

- Chronology of Important Events
- National Historic Landmarks
- Districts Listed on the National Register
- Structures/Buildings/Objects Listed on the National Register
- Multiple Property Documentation Forms
- Local Landmarks
- Local Historic Districts
- Districts Found Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- Areas with Potential for National Register Listing
- Traditional Neighborhoods

Map - Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement 34-35

Historic Contexts

Historic contexts are used to determine the significance of local events and structures. Four contexts were explored as a part of the Community Preservation Plan:

- Development of the City: Reform and Renewal, 1907-1920

Map - 1907-1920 Commercial and Institutional Buildings of Architectural and Historical Significance 40-41

Map - Location of Architecturally Significant Bungalows 46-47

Map - Des Moines' Development History 48-49

- * • Double Houses and Row Houses: Affordable Housing

Map - Double Houses 52-53

- Ethnic Heritage: Before the Melting Pot

Map - Ethnic Settlements 56-57

- Life With the Rivers

REFERENCE

Codes, Ordinances and Policies

This section serves as a reference manual and includes a compilation of city codes, ordinances and policies. The ordinances are reprinted from the *Municipal Code of the City of Des Moines* adopted 1991. All codes, policies and ordinances are subject to amendment by the City Council.

- Historic District Ordinance 64
- Landmarks Ordinance 67
- Abandoned Housing Ordinance 70
- City-Owned Historic Building Policy 71
- Historic Street Light Policy 72
- Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement 72
- Section 104(f) of the 1991 Uniform Building Code 75
- Residential Historic District Zoning Classification (R-HD) 76
- Certified Local Government Agreement 80
- Standard Specifications for Construction of Public Improvements 81

Graphic - Brick Sidewalks

Graphic - Street Excavation, Pavement Restoration



History of Preservation in Des Moines

AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTIES OR DISTRICTS

The following areas have been cited in studies as having potential to be districts eligible for the National Register or containing a number of properties that might be eligible for the National Register individually. Each area requires more intensive survey and identification work to be determined if the entire area or portions of the area are eligible. Some of the areas have integrity problems that may have made them ineligible since the time the district was originally noted. Regardless of National Register listing or potential, these are strong neighborhoods within the City of Des Moines that contribute to the community character of the city.

RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER STUDY IN TOWARDS A GREATER DES MOINES

by W.C. Page and J. Walroth 1992

Brown's Woods Plat—South of Grand Avenue to John Lynde Road, 37th to 42nd Streets

Capital Park Plat—E. 9th to E. 14th Streets, E. Washington to University Avenues

Clark Street—19th to 23rd Streets

Connors Street—S.E. 8th Street, Lacona and Bell Avenues

Greenwood Park Plat—Ingersoll Avenue to Grand Avenue, 39th to 42nd Streets

Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor—Pennsylvania Avenue between Washington and Roosevelt Avenues (includes Wise's Subdivision and Washington Heights Place)

Portland Place Plat—South of Grand Avenue along 37th Street

South Main Street—S.E. 6th Street, south of Hartford Avenue

RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER STUDY IN DES MOINES, A SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES

by Barbara Beving Long, 1983

Auto Row—Both sides of Locust Street, 9th to 15th Streets

Francis Avenue—18th Street to Martin Luther King Parkway

RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER STUDY IN DES MOINES HERITAGE PHASE I AND II DES MOINES PLANNING COMMISSION, 1976 AND 1977

Capitol East—E. 15th to E. 18th Streets, Lyon to Dean Avenues

Court Avenue Warehouse District—South of Court Avenue

Foster Drive—42nd Street to Park Hill Drive along Woodlawn Drive

Logan East—E. 7th to E. 13th Street, University Avenue to the Freeway

Terrace Hill District—Polk and Hubbell Plat south of Grand Avenue, Allen Road to Terrace Place

Union Park—6th Avenue to railroad tracks, Hull to Washington Avenues

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS

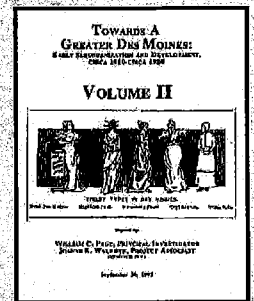
There are additional neighborhoods that have strong community character because of a particular housing style or type or because of the presence of unique streets within the area. These areas have never been cited in a particular study but are of interest to planners and residents because of their contribution to the city's character. These neighborhoods may contain a high concentration of historic housing stock particularly bungalows or Foursquares from the era 1907 through 1920.

State of Iowa demolishes Court Avenue Viaduct

Towards a Greater Des Moines Early Suburbanization and Development
by W.C. Page and J. Walroth*

City of Des Moines hosts annual Certified Local Government Conference

*New Coalitions: Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing**



1993

Des Moines Sesquicentennial

Designation of the Dragoon Trail



1994

Des Moines' Community Preservation Plan adopted as an element of Des Moines' Comprehensive Plan*

Community Development Block Grant money allocated for National Register Nominations in River Bend Neighborhood

1995

City of Des Moines Park System History (in progress)

Survey of Downtown Des Moines' Commercial Architecture 1889-1935
by Patricia Eckhardt*

Community Development Block Grant money allocated for community preservation activities

- house moving
- mothballing of vacant houses

* Grant funds administered through the State of Iowa Historical Society, Historic Preservation Bureau used in the project.

Attachment #2

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TOWARDS A GREATER DES MOINES: EARLY SUBURBANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT, CIRCA 1880-CIRCA 1920

VOLUME I



TRILBY TYPES IN DES MOINES.

North Des Moines. Highland Park. University Place. Capital Park. South Side.

Prepared by:

WILLIAM C. PAGE, PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
JOANNE R. WALROTH, PROJECT ASSOCIATE
DES MOINES, IOWA

September 30, 1992

- E. Statement of Historic Contexts
(If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)
- VI. Suburban Case Studies

GREENWOOD PARK

Introduction

Greenwood Park, the formerly independent town and early Des Moines suburb, embraces roughly 1,000 acres of land located in the western portion of Des Moines. The Raccoon River demarks this suburb on the south, 28th Street on the east, 42nd Street on the west, and Center Street on the north. These boundaries are documented in the records of the Iowa State Secretary of State's Office, now held in the archives of the Iowa State Library, in an incorporation filing dated February 11, 1887. (In current parlance, "Greenwood Park" means many things to many people, few of whom would use this term to delineate the historic community with the historic boundaries as described here.)

As it has evolved, Greenwood Park--the town and early suburb--comprises three distinct sections. They are named in this report South of Grand, Grand-Ingersoll Avenue, and North of Woodland. (These names are nonhistoric.). The area south of Grand Avenue is hilly, and the land slopes in places sharply into the Raccoon River floodplain. Grand and Ingersoll Avenues run along an upland spine in an east-west direction. North of Woodland Avenue (and somewhat north of Ingersoll), the land slopes down moderately. This topography strongly affected the development of the area.

SOUTH OF GRAND (a designation currently used to describe this section), comprises almost entirely single-family dwellings built on large lots. These houses are among Des Moines' finest estate-type houses, and many are architect-designed and feature a high level of architectural detail. Roads are laid out in strongly curvilinear fashion and the standard American street grid is almost nonexistent (the only straight streets are the entrances into this section, 28th, 37th, and 42nd Streets.) Many of this section's estate-type houses stand on ridges, with the streets--such as Lincoln Place, Arapaho, and Tonawanda Drives--winding at the feet of these ridges. One plat within this section, Owl's Head (NRHP), comprises a variety of Edwardian influenced architecture, while most other sections have a somewhat later architectural feeling, with Period Revival styling, for example, prominently evident.

GRAND-INGERSOLL AVENUE, including the city blocks in between, was also upbuilt with large-size, architect-designed houses. Beginning around the turn of the century, public and semi-public institutions, such as churches and a fire station, were also built here, in addition to a number of apartment buildings. The street layout here is based on the American street grid plan. Grand-Ingersoll Avenue has, over the years, been subject to recurrent redevelopment. The area east of 38th Street poses many questions of integrity, while the residential area west of 38th is subject to redevelopment pressure.

NORTH OF WOODLAND the complexion of suburban Greenwood Park dramatically changes. This section is characterized by smaller lots, by smaller-scale of houses, and by homes built one to two decades later. Streets here are also laid out on the American street grid plan. Upbuilt in the first three decades of the Twentieth Century, this section is difficult to distinguish from other residential sections in Des Moines because its characteristics are shared by most of the city's neighborhoods from this period.

Agitation for incorporation as an independent town surfaced in Greenwood Park in 1880. At this time, 25 residents signed a petition for incorporation. A referendum on this issue was held on January 15, 1881, at which time 22 voted in favor and zero voted in opposition to incorporation. A public hearing on this question was subsequently held on February 5, 1881. The plat for the town of Greenwood Park was filed for the public record six days later at the Iowa Secretary of State's Office.

In 1882, Greenwood Park, the suburb, was described in a Des Moines city directory in this manner:

Was incorporated in 1881, adjoins the city on the west, and is the most beautiful of our suburban towns. It contains some of the most elegant residences in this part of the country, and Greenwood Avenue the finest drive in the city, extends throughout its entire length from east to west. It is very popular as a place of residence, and many of our leading business men prefer a residence there to the more crowded portions of the city. Most of the houses have telephone communication with the business portion of Des Moines; sidewalk is laid throughout the entire length of Greenwood Avenue, and it is anticipated that a street railway will be laid through Greenwood Park to Brown's Park, and the Iowa State Fair grounds, which lie immediately west of Greenwood Park. (*Bushnell's Des Moines Trade Circular*, p. 58).

Greenwood Avenue was subsequently renamed Grand Avenue. This characterization of the suburb was confirmed several years later, when, in 1889-1890, another directory reported that

GREENWOOD PARK--This is one of the most beautiful of Des Moines suburban towns, containing many of the finest and most costly residences in this section. It is traversed throughout its entire length by the east and west motor line, and is very popular as a place of residence, who vie with each other in the beauty and elegance of their homes. It adjoins the city on the west, and Greenwood avenue, one of the most beautiful drives of the city, extends throughout it east and west. (*Bushnell's Des Moines City Directory*, 1889-90, p. 49).

Estate Lands

Greenwood Park constitutes an anomaly among Des Moines' early suburbs. Development occurred slowly, and when it did, the improvements were among the city's finest.

Already in the late 1860s, Grand Avenue had become a location of preference for the city's élite. Grand Avenue was constructed as an east-west road along a ridge at an early time. This route became the showplace avenue of fashionable residences in the late Nineteenth century, and it included some of the most beautiful estates ever built in Des Moines. Most of the owners of these trend-setting buildings were the leaders of industry and commerce in the city, as well as socially prominent. Extant examples include the Jefferson S. Polk House, Herndon Hall, at 2000 Grand Avenue, Terrace Hill, the home of Frederick M. Hubbell at 2300 Grand Avenue, and W. W. Witmer's home at 2900 Grand Avenue.

This trend continued throughout the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. Greenwood Park differed significantly from the other suburbs, such as University Place, North Des Moines, and areas further from the downtown such as Highland Park. Large tracts in these suburbs were developed by groups of men, called syndicates, who together bought up large tracts of land and then developed and sold them off in small lots.

Greenwood Park saw a very different pattern. Early in the suburban movement, in the 1870s and 1880s, wealthy men began buying large tracts of land in Greenwood Park. Some, such as James Callanan, built large mansions there, but also used part of the tracts for philanthropic purposes, such as Callanan College and the Home for the Aged, for which he donated the site. Others, such as Clapp, used the land to build mansions where they could retreat from the central city. Still others, such as Polk, Hubbell, and Talmadge E. Brown bought tracts as investments, for future development when real estate prices increased after improvements were added. Still others hoped to have farms, where they could combine the benefits of rural life with locations near the central city. But in almost all of the cases in Greenwood Park, it was one individual buying large tracts, rather than syndicates as in the other suburbs.

The Fagen family provides another example. A large tract owned by them abutted Grand Avenue above 29th Street. Title to this property passed to the Sisters of Charity, who erected Saint Joseph's Academy, a private school for women, on the site. Mr. Pierce was also involved in the subdivision of the Fagen Estate. A 22 acre parcel of land remains attached to the St. Joseph's property today, although it is now owned by the University of Osteopathic Medicine and Health Sciences.

Even into the Twentieth Century, the density of population in Greenwood Park was low, particularly south of Grand. When the streetcar line was laid in the Nineteenth Century, this route was along Ingersoll Avenue, not along Grand Avenue. The location of this route indicates the lower population density south of Grand (whose residents had the means to provide private transportation for themselves anyway).

When real estate development began to occur in Greenwood Park, land prices were among the most expensive in Des Moines. This development took place in several phases. Grand-Ingersoll Avenue developed in the early years of the Twentieth Century. About this time, property adjacent to 37th and 42nd Streets, which had been laid out south of Grand, opened up for development.

A number of public and semi-public institutions were established in Grand-Ingersoll Avenue between 32nd and 42nd Streets. These institutions included, in 1914, Greenwood Park Church (nonextant on 34th Street at the head of Crescent Drive), Greenwood Congregation Church (nonextant on 35th Street), Fire Station Number 12 (extant at 535 40th Street). Later institutions that built in the area included St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church and Plymouth Congregational Church.

South of Grand

The South of Grand area is highlighted in this section of the report because it is the largest geographic portion of Greenwood Park. South of Grand opened for real estate development slowly. Beginning in the first decades of the Twentieth Century, property adjacent to 37th and 42nd Streets, which intersected Grand Avenue, began to be improved. Important plats on these streets include Portland Place on 37th Street and Brown's Woods on 42nd Street. These streets also followed ridges which ran to the south. Property adjacent to other streets was developed next. The most important of these "hinterland" streets are 31st Street (also known, at least for a portion of this stretch, as Lincoln Place Drive), 37th Street, and 42nd Street (earlier known as Park Lane). Lincoln Place Drive, primarily an east-west street, now links these north-south streets together. For a portion of its run, Lincoln Place Drive (between 31st and River Oaks Drive) also runs along a ridge-spine. In conclusion, all of these roads are important--not because they provide traffic corridors to other destinations--but because they service an area attractive to potential home