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This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

The Small Homes of Howard F. Moffitt in Iowa City and Coralville, Iowa

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

The Small Homes of Howard F. Moffitt in Iowa City and Coralville, Iowa,
1924-1943

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Jan R. Nash *Jan R. Nash*

organization for PHR Associates date December 1, 1992

street & number 906 S. Lucas telephone 319/351-5156

city or town Iowa City state Iowa zip code 52240

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jan R. Nash
Signature and title of certifying official

3/15/93
Date

State Historical Society of Iowa
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Vatrick W. Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

5/4/93
Date of Action

fn

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Continuation Sheet

The Small Homes of Howard F. Moffitt in
Iowa City and Coralville, Iowa

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E. THE SMALL HOMES OF HOWARD F. MOFFITT IN IOWA CITY AND CORALVILLE, IOWA, 1924-1943

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1. Introduction

Eccentric, an adjective defined as "deviating from the recognized or customary character or practice; irregular; erratic; peculiar; odd." Howard Moffitt was truly eccentric when it came to building small homes in Iowa City and Coralville, Iowa. The structures he built between 1924 and 1943 have an appealing aesthetic quality, yet he followed no formula for creating a particular house style. His homes clearly have a comfortable, livable character, yet tradesmen tell horror stories of trying to repair them. And while most builders of the time constructed shelters for the new personal form of transportation--the automobile--as free-standing structures located to the side or behind the house, Moffitt again veered another direction by integrating his garage into the body of the house.

He is easily remembered by area residents. Former tenants and owners of Moffitt houses fondly recall his distinctive approach to design and the embellishment of his houses, and credit him with providing needed affordable rental housing. Builders, on the other hand, remember him for his scavenging activities, his use of day labor and unskilled workers, his "building it on the cheap" philosophy.

Moffitt was both a throwback and an innovator. He used and reused available materials--small pieces of limestone easily collected from river bend outcroppings, discarded rails from the city's defunct suburban streetcar system, bricks salvaged from demolition sites, front doors and staircases from

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fire-damaged buildings. He put to good use materials other builders considered unsuitable. In doing so, Moffitt employed some traditional small-home construction techniques, practical solutions for working with raw or recycled materials. Yet when the situation demanded an innovative solution, Moffitt freely experimented. If one way didn't work, another might. If cardboard disintegrated when used as insulation from Iowa's cold winters, sawdust from the lumberyard worked anyway. Above all else, Howard Moffitt was a practical man.

2. Housing Shortage/Small-Home Building Boom

The environment in which Howard Moffitt worked demanded practicality. The presence of the University of Iowa in small-town Iowa City had, and continues to have, a profound effect on residential property use. It results in a ready need for rental housing since married students and the families of young faculty and staff represent a dynamic and transient housing market with limited financial resources. The relatively stable economy created by the university attracts supporting retail businesses and professionals and infuses the community with additional new faces and families. The university's influence on the housing market in Iowa City was especially strong during the tenure of university president Walter Jessup (1916 to 1934) who orchestrated the university's expansion including several new departments and colleges, the construction of 33 new buildings, and student enrollment which climbed from 3300 in 1916 to a peak of 10,000 in the 30s.¹ Howard Bowen, who was on the College of Commerce faculty from 1935 to 1944 and president of the university during the 1960s, rented a Moffitt house before he constructed his west side home. He thought the Moffitt rental was a bargain and "often remarked to friends that Mr. Moffitt was indeed a benefactor to those of us who were fortunate enough to rent his houses--and that he was indeed a benefactor to the University as a whole by supplying low-cost but habitable homes for young faculty."² While the small houses Moffitt built were rooted in the popular styles of the day, the eccentric spin he put on them may have found an especially appreciative audience in the university community.

Nationwide the country was experiencing a severe housing shortage, publicly acknowledged by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover in 1920 when he

¹Stow Persons, *The University of Iowa in the Twentieth Century*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990), pp. 57-103.

²Howard Bowen letter to Phil Miller, August 18, 1989. Contained in P. Miller Collection.

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wrote: "I am convinced that this country is short fully a million houses."³ Hoover blamed this situation on a population increase of a million new families since before the war, coupled with the wartime diversion of labor and materials away from home building. Failure of post-war construction to recover and meet the demand was the fault, he felt, of those in the building trades--both suppliers of materials and labor--who increased prices and wages unfairly. Builders were thus inhibited from building even if they could afford the high cost.

Today the great demand for housing in the 1920s is understood more broadly. Family values and ideas about single-family home ownership had changed from Victorian times. Victorian family life was more prescribed and those families that could afford it lived in large homes filled with relatively small rooms. Specific functions were assigned to domestic space; the formal front parlor, for example, was reserved for receiving guests while the family relaxed in a rear parlor; the front porch and yard were both family and public space, while the rear yard was a service area. The basement of a large 19th-century home was the industrial center of domestic life and architectural plans often label the functions of these basement spaces. Separate rooms are earmarked to wash clothes, to line-dry the laundry, to can fruits and vegetables, to store the summer's garden produce, to contain the furnace, and to store coal. Sometimes a small room contained the heads for the inflow pipes from the cistern buried just beyond the basement wall. Urban Victorian families of more modest means and new immigrant arrivals to this country, on the other hand, lived in flats and apartments. Seventy-five percent of urban residents lived in rented quarters in 1900.⁴ When young couples married, they had several choices: they could live with the parents for the first few years of their marriage, they could rent an apartment if they lived in a urban area, or, those parents who could afford to might build the couple a new house, often smaller, often next door or on land nearby.

The post-Victorian family of the early 20th century, though, was more informal and the role of women was expanding. Women were expected to broaden their interests beyond the realm of the home. Large houses seemed antiquated in a time of rapidly developing household technologies and the burden of running a large, complicated home was unwanted. Also, largely as a result of late 19th-century reformers, these big houses had become tainted as "unhealthy," poorly ventilated and filled with sewer gas and other foul airs.

³Herbert Hoover letter to John R. Dunlap, November 18, 1920 (Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Public Statement No. 106). Dunlap, editor of the magazine Industrial Management, published the letter.

⁴Clifford E. Clark, *The American Family Home, 1800-1960*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 182.

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The reformers' efforts had been primarily aimed at improving the health and standard of living for urban tenement dwellers and, as a result, tenements also became equated with poor health, characterized by unsanitary and crowded conditions.

At the same time, the goal of home ownership had become deeply imbedded in the American psyche by the 1920s. It was a form of secure investment for the future and the fruit of the American dream. It was democracy in action. Urban tenement living was associated with an ethnic, immigrant past. To move out of the tenements, was to move ahead. With rising income levels and an expanding middle class--the average urban resident's income more than doubled from \$651 in 1900 to \$1505 in 1917⁵--it was possible for thousands to move out of rented flats and tenements in urban centers. With mail-order companies like Aladdin Company and Sears, Roebuck and Co. selling houses for less than \$3000 it was possible to buy or build a home, rather than rent. New homes in the new suburbs became the American ideal. *Small* new homes in the suburbs were the best of all worlds. They were affordable, efficient and healthy.

3. Howard Moffitt's Small Homes

a. Iowa City/Coralville Area in 1924-1943

The rise in popularity of new small homes reflected the rapidly expanding middle class of the early 20th century and epitomized the progressive family ideals. Combined with the effect of the war-time diversion of labor and materials, the demand for new construction created a building boom nationwide. In Iowa City, the university's major expansion spanned the decade of the 1920s and increased the local demand for rental properties. It is no mystery why Howard Moffitt and his partner Ray Blakesly went into the business of building small houses to rent in Iowa City.

Rental housing needs in Iowa City had been answered in a variety of ways prior to Moffitt. Rooms could be rented in private homes; also, such homes were subdivided into discrete apartments, especially near the university campus. There were rooming houses, some hotels provided long-term renters with rooms, and after 1913 the University of Iowa addressed its students' rental needs by building dormitories. Other students' housing requirements were met by sororities and fraternities. Duplex residences which predate Moffitt are extant in Iowa City, but not in great quantities. Structures were built as apartment buildings in Iowa City as early as 1916 with the Summit Apartment Building (National Register listed), designed by Chicago architect Parker Noble Berry and built by local contractor F.X. Freyder. Apartment

⁵ *Ibid.*

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building to fill the need for rental housing in Iowa City did not reach its modern proportions until the 1960s when the new-construction orientation of urban renewal was strong.

Research has not revealed any other body of rental housing in Iowa City comparable in size and age to that built by Howard Moffitt during the period of significance. Other builders at the time were principally engaged in building homes for sale.⁶

Moffitt began building houses as a sideline, one of several co-existent enterprises he commenced after World War I. He had trained as a pilot in Texas, but the war ended before he saw action and he never made it to Europe. By 1924 however, Moffitt was back in Iowa City, partners with Ray Blakesly. The Moffitt-Blakesly partnership, which lasted until 1932 (when Blakesly, financially broken by the Depression, moved from town), included not only house-building, but also interests in several automobile-related businesses including the local Nash dealership.⁷

Throughout his building career in Iowa City, Moffitt was known for his informal and eccentric ways. He used unskilled or day labor, but with the heavy demand for new construction during the 1920s skilled labor had become a scarce commodity. During the 1930s he is said to have hired "W.P.A. workers" (who may have had prior masonry experience) and Mexicans, presumably from

⁶Long-time Iowa City contractor Warren Burger was asked about the contractors in Iowa City in the 1920s and 1930s. His father, Frank Burger, had started his own construction business during the 1920s and 30s and son, Warren, continued it until just recently. Warren Burger indicated that "Iowa City was a small town in those days" and the "none of the principal contractors [Dunlap Construction Co., Huntzinger-Wagner company, Hubert Miller, Nate Moore, Sr., McCreedy Construction Co.] in town were building rental houses." Even when he was in college during World War II there wasn't much rental housing in Iowa City [interviewed by J.Nash, 7/28/92]. Hugh Dunlap, one of those principal contractors, was also interviewed and while this interview produced a long list of Dunlap-built houses and commercial structures all over Iowa City, all of the houses were built for sale and not as rentals [interviewed by J.Nash, 7/28/92].

⁷Robert Blakesly and Doris Blakesly Kriz, children of Ray Blakesly, recalled during a 1987 interview that their father lost everything during the Depression; that "everything went to hell [in 1932]," and that they moved to Anamosa, Iowa "flat broke." They believed Howard Moffitt had been helped financially during that dark period by his sister, Anna Rapp. They also thought he had begun hauling coal at that time in an attempt "to hold the whole thing together" (P. Miller Collection, vol. 5).

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Texas where he was developing real estate interests and to which he permanently moved in 1943. He would employ school age youths to clean mortar off bricks he intended to reuse, and shifted the employees of his various business concerns around to whichever job site needed them. He occasionally paid a worker with a used car rather than cash.

b. Moffitt Property Types

Property types associated with Howard Moffitt are small single-family houses and multi-family attached small houses. Multi-family residences--the duplex or triplex--differ from traditional apartment buildings in that each family in Moffitt's units is housed in a free-standing small house which is attached to one or two identical small houses, all of which share a common lot and grounds. Within the historical context, Moffitt is not associated with vertical apartments or commercial structures.

Moffitt houses are an eclectic mixture of house forms and stylistic influences, but a property typology based upon the key exterior distinguishing feature of each house is helpful in understanding the variety of Moffitt's small house architecture. Moffitt borrowed most heavily from two popular styles of the time, Craftsman and Period Houses, but he also freely mixed elements of each to house forms not strictly associated with the style. Therefore, numerous examples of Moffitt houses are united not by style but by some other commonality, Moffitt's massive prominent chimney or his use of a stone veneer front wall, for example. The overriding theme, however, which unites individual Moffitt houses and the entire inventory of Moffitt residential architecture is their ability to project an appearance of a cozy, snug and inviting small home. When placed in the context of many such structures in a confined geographic area--Iowa City and Coralville, Iowa--Moffitt's architecture gives a recognizable and significant local character to the appearance of the towns.

Craftsman details employed by Moffitt include small size, low pitched roof, exposed rafters, knee braces and other decorative beams under the eaves. The use of cobblestones and rock in the construction is also consistent with the Craftsman style. Period Houses, the look Moffitt most clearly tried to achieve, referenced English and continental European ancient vernacular architecture, as well early Spanish and east coast Colonial influences from this country. Period Houses became fashionable in part due to the first-hand experiences of Americans on English and European soil during World War I. Their popularity was widespread. Architects designed precise academic reproductions of the originals, especially in Colonial Revival renditions, but the style was also readily available in less expensive and less faithful reproductions from house plan companies like Gordon Van Tine, of Davenport, Iowa, and mail-order companies like Aladdin Company, of Bay City, Michigan.

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Publications of the Small House Service Bureau of the United States, Inc. (SHSB), an arm of the American Institute of Architects, contained many scaled down, but still academically correct Period Houses. Herbert Hoover's "Better Homes Movement" of the late 1920s, aligned with the SHSB, was one attempt to alleviate the housing shortage and brought a sort of national endorsement of small Period Houses. Further national attention was focused on early American architecture when the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began in 1933.

Howard Moffitt's Period Houses were not based on first-hand experience across the Atlantic Ocean, nor were they based on academically precise plans which he considered too expensive.⁸ His houses weren't precise at all since he changed and combined details at will. Moffitt's inspiration for the houses he would build came from readily available sources. His son recalls Moffitt used popular magazines, specifically House Beautiful and American Home, for design inspiration and floor plans. Design inspiration also came from his wife Anna Glasgow Moffitt and another woman, Eleanor Hageboeck. Mrs. Hageboeck and her husband rented several different Moffitt houses. With a background in Art History, she worked with Moffitt for the pure creative enjoyment of it. Moffitt would come to her with a building lot in mind and say "what are we going to do here?" and Mrs. Hageboeck would work out floor plans and interior details for the site.

c. Location as an Indicator of Moffitt Houses

Moffitt's practice was to build many rental units within fairly confined areas of Iowa City rather than individual structures widely dispersed from each other. He was not designing and building homes for property owners who had their own building lots, rather he controlled and built on large numbers of building lots in new developments. Geography then becomes an important tool in identifying Moffitt houses as well as a convenient method of grouping structures together for discussion purposes. Such groupings also reflect similarities in styling and construction years and additional research may define potential historic districts within each geographic area:

i. Rundell Addition Area

Construction on Moffitt's earliest group of houses began in 1924 and continued until the early 1930s in the Rundell Addition area of eastern Iowa City. Covering the earlier Rundell farm, the Rundell Addition was platted for

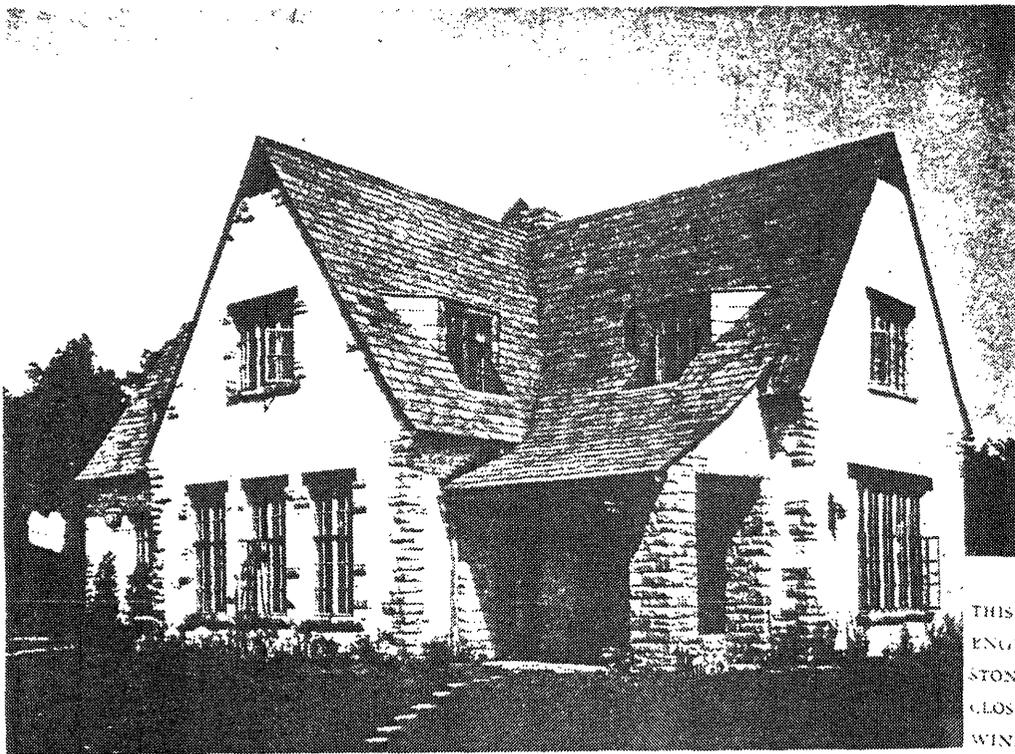
⁸Moffitt once had asked Iowa City builder Hugh Dunlap, who had been academically trained, to design some house plans for him. However, when presented with the plans, Moffitt decided they were too expensive and never accepted them (Dunlap interview, July 28, 1992).

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THIS HOUSE IS A SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE OF THE ENGLISH COTTAGE TYPE BUILT OF BRICK AND STONE. ITS LOW EAVES WHICH BRING IT CLOSE TO THE GROUND AND ITS LARGE WINDOWS WHICH REDUCE ITS SCALE, HELP TO GIVE IT THE CHARM OF THE SMALL HOUSES OF MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

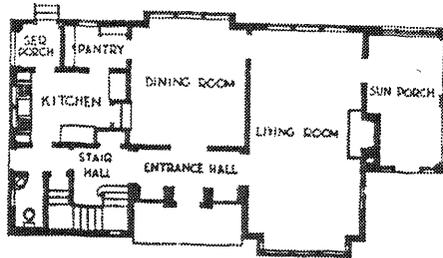
Illustration and caption taken from the August 1925 issue of House Beautiful, a magazine Howard Moffitt is known to have used for design inspiration. Articles often carried floor plans along with the photographs and text describing the featured homes.

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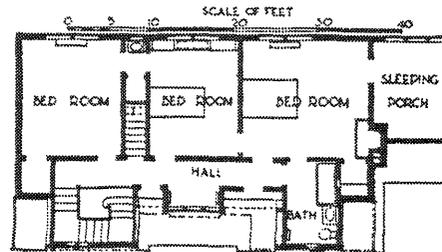
THE SMALL HOMES OF HOWARD F. MOFFITT IN IOWA CITY AND CORALVILLE, IOWA



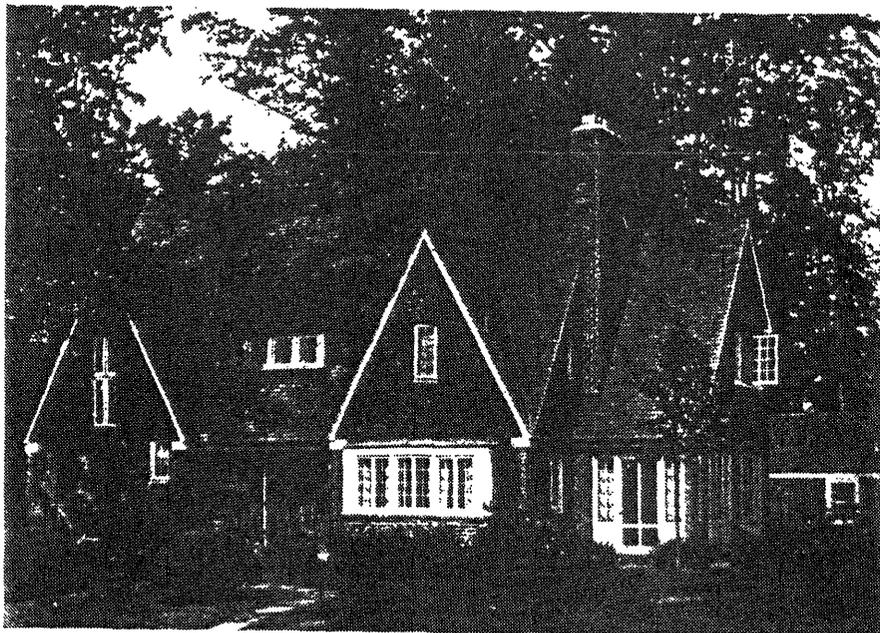
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

AT THE SAME TIME MEET THE FAMILY'S VERY DEFINITE REQUIREMENTS. IT IS OF BRICK VENEER WITH WHITE PINE USED AS TRIM BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT. WITH ITS SYMMETRICAL GABLES DIFFERENTLY TREATED, IT EFFECTS A CHARMING COMPROMISE BETWEEN INFORMALITY AND CONVENTIONALITY

THIS IS ONE OF THE SEVERAL HOUSES PRESENTED IN THE SMALL-HOUSE COMPETITION WHICH WERE BUILT BY ARCHITECTS FOR THEIR OWN OCCUPANCY. THIS HOUSE, AS THE PLANS SHOW, WAS THE RESULT OF A CAREFUL STUDY TO ACQUIRE THE MAXIMUM SUNLIGHT AND VENTILATION AND



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Illustration, caption and floor plans taken from the September 1925 issue of House Beautiful. The house exhibits many of the same features characteristic of Howard Moffitt's homes: the steeply pitched front gables of the Tudor Revival style Period House; low eaves with roof dormers; massive fireplace chimney; one or one-and-a-half stories. This house, which appears fairly substantial in size by today's perceptions was considered a "small house" by early twentieth-century standards.

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residential development by Bert Manville and had been serviced since 1909 by the city's first streetcar line. Additional houses were built nearby on Seventh and Muscatine avenues.

Houses in this area tend to be frame and one or one-and-a-half stories. While most are single-family structures, there are also a number of duplexes, especially on Seventh Avenue and around the corner on Muscatine Avenue. The single most distinctive element of most of these houses is the massive front or side exterior chimney. Built of brick, usually dark brown or kidney red and occasionally covered instead with stucco, these chimneys are a very prominent feature on houses of this small scale. Often the widest portion of the chimney contains a decorative checkerboard pattern framed in the brickwork. Most of the homes strongly exhibiting a Craftsman styling are extant in this neighborhood. Tudor Revival houses, a type of Period House, can also be found.

Buildings from this time period may have a higher proportion of new materials used in their construction than Moffitt's latter buildings. Future research on these houses should include this as a possibility. Financially, times were good and the housing market in Iowa City was booming despite the sagging agricultural economy generally in Iowa after 1921. According to son Robert Blakesly, his father and Moffitt began by building houses for themselves to live in but would "no more get the curtains hung then they would sell and start over" (P. Miller Collection, vol. 5). Also, Blakesly and Moffitt had philosophical differences about the use of salvaged material which may have impacted the construction of their houses. Blakesly felt quality construction in rental housing would result in lower maintenance costs in the future, while Moffitt wanted to build them as cheaply as possible.

ii. South of Kirkwood Avenue

Another area of Iowa City densely built with Moffitt houses is south of Kirkwood Avenue. Bordered roughly by Franklin St. on the east, DeForest St. on the south, and Ridge St. on the west, this area contains nearly 80 houses which strongly exhibit features associated with Moffitt's buildings. Not all such houses are documented Moffitt-built houses within this study, however they are likely candidates for future research.

Portions of this area of Iowa City were platted as early as 1857 by Robert S. Lucas, son of the territorial governor. Other plats for the area were filed in 1916 (Sunnyside Addition), 1924 (S.J. Kirkwood Homestead Addition) and the largest portion, Kirkwood Place, was platted by Bert Manville in 1925. Moffitt likely built houses in all these additions.

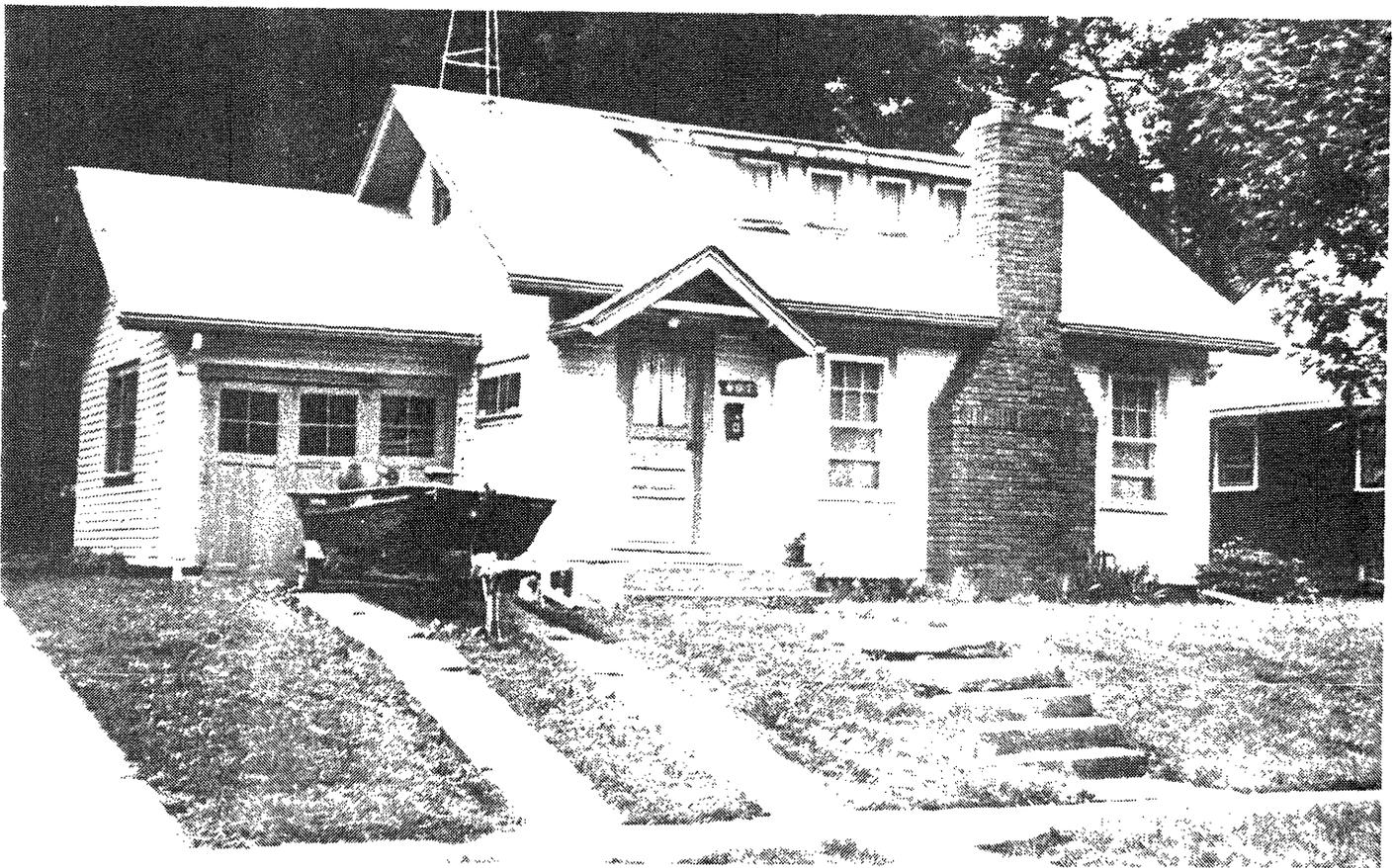
Historic Iowa City south of the Rock Island Railroad tracks (now Iowa Interstate R.R.) has not been well documented, but evidences some of the

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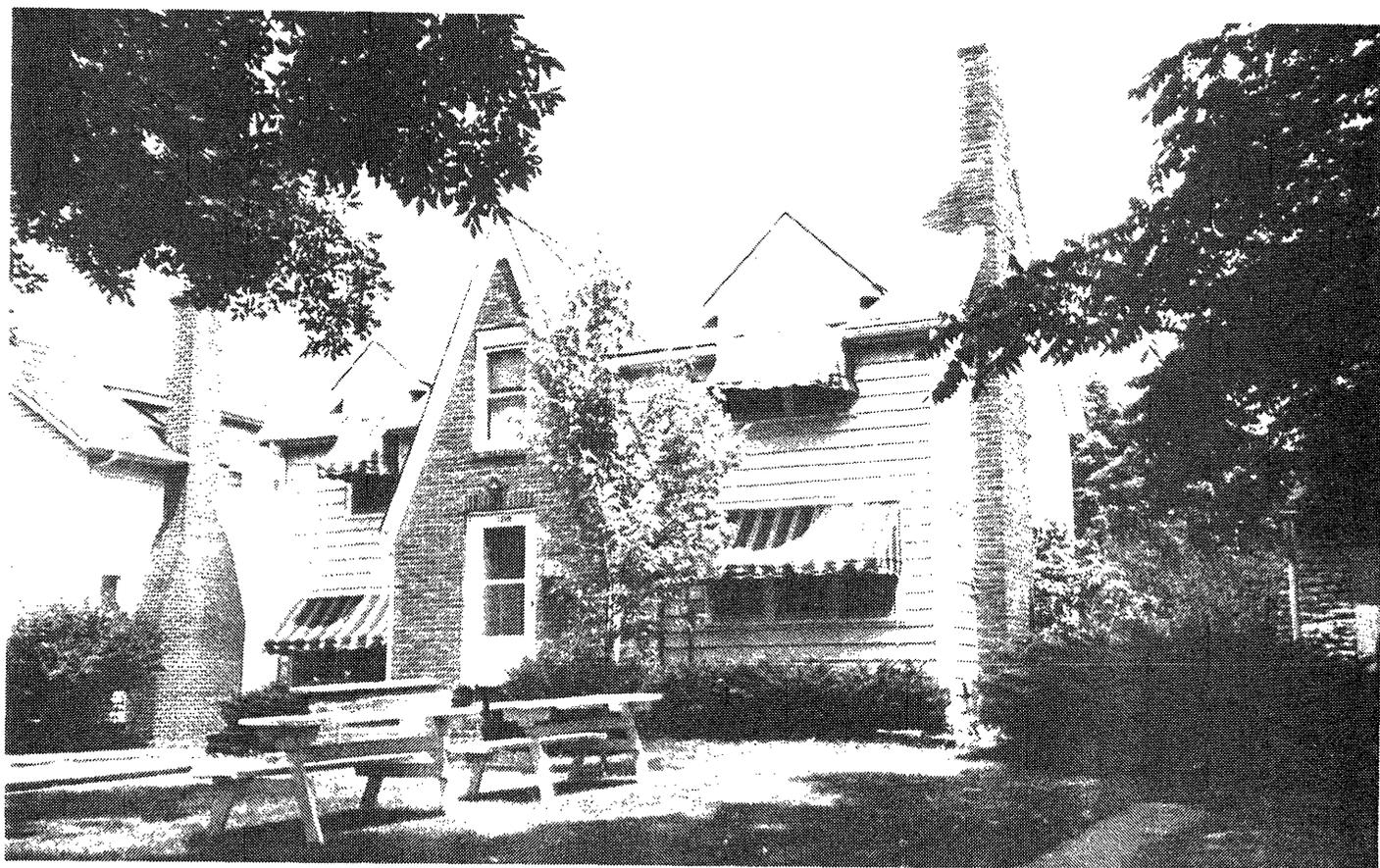
607 Rundell St., Iowa City, Iowa. This house exhibits the small scale and prominent fireplace chimney typical in this neighborhood associated with Howard Moffitt. Built in 1927 while Moffitt was in partnership with Ray Blakesly. (East front, south side, photographer facing northwest. M. Carpenter photograph.)

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1210 Yewell St., Iowa City, Iowa. Period House in the Tudor Revival style. Built ca. 1930. (West front, south side, photographer facing northeast, M. Carpenter photograph.)

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earliest homes and non-farming activities in the Iowa City area. The 19th-century homes of governors Lucas and Kirkwood still stand along Kirkwood Avenue (formerly Wyoming Road). Perhaps influenced by the presence of these esteemed early residents, others built large and sometimes elegant homes along Kirkwood Avenue, a number of which are extant. See for example, 806 Kirkwood (ca. 1885), 910 Dodge St. (ca. 1880), and 1110 Kirkwood (ca. 1875). Other early development in this area includes an enclave of odd-sized lots and small cottages south of the railroad tracks in the approximate area of the former depot site at Johnson Street. This may evidence worker housing associated with the railroad and includes a small-house type identified in studies of northern Iowa City as the "North Side Turn-of-the-Century Cottage."⁹ Extant early institutional structures include a 19th century or turn-of-the-century brick school house known as the "Kirkwood School" at the corner of Dodge Street and Kirkwood, and the 1894 Wickham Chapel (726 Walnut), which is associated with the "Sunday School movement" of the late 1890s.

Though platted in the teens and 1920s, 1933 Sanborn maps for the area south of Kirkwood Street indicate it was sparsely built, especially in the Kirkwood Place addition where only a handful of houses had been constructed. By 1944, however, the fire maps indicate enough building had occurred to more than double the number of houses. And now present were a number of stone-veneered "English"¹⁰ cottages--the housing type for which Howard Moffitt is

⁹Elaine Baxter, *North Side Neighborhood Preservation Study: Historic Structures Inventory*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Institute of Urban and Regional Research & City of Iowa City, 1977; rev. 1978), p. 24.

¹⁰To call Moffitt's stone cottages "English" is not entirely adequate. The immediate and primary influence on Moffitt's stone houses is found on the pages of popular magazines such as House Beautiful where images of both ancient structures and modern architect-drawn reproductions were often found during the 1920s and 1930s. The structures appearing on the pages of these magazines reflect a mix of Continental- and English-influenced vernacular building styles. One recent study of Iowa City houses thought to have been built by Moffitt (the documentation is unclear) illustrates the variety of ethnic influences readable in Moffitt's cottages [Blane H. Nansel, "Moffit[sic] Cottages An Iowa City Vernacular Revival," 1988]. However, while there is direct evidence that Moffitt used the popular magazines for inspiration, there is no such evidence to suggest that he had any personal knowledge of the ancient prototypes, or that he was the recipient of any particular ethnic building heritage. While one may "read" a variety of ethnically-derived details in Moffitt's stone cottages, it is unwise to "read" too much lest the actual context in which Moffitt worked be overshadowed. The Flemish kick to a roof line, or the Dutch flavor of a facade, or the affinity to the German *Kuche/Stube* house form are far more attributable to the architects and designers employed by the popular magazines than to Howard

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best remembered--around the picturesque hill-and-dale topography at Pickard and Friendly Avenues. Despite the 1934 drought and the deepening nationwide depression, Moffitt appears to have continued building small homes at an even clip throughout the 30s.

Many of the houses in this area are larger than those in the Rundell Addition, although they would still be termed "small homes" within the building jargon of the day. Story-and-a half homes are in the majority here, some with ample second floor space. The variety of stylistic details and house forms also is greater than in the Rundell neighborhood. In addition to a few Craftsman houses, relatively more Tudor Revival, and simple rectangular houses decorated with stone front walls, there are also gambrel-roofed "Dutch Colonials," the English cottages and spare, small square pyramid-roofed structures.

The same, husky-looking brick or stuccoed chimney is frequently seen on these houses, but not so often dwarfing a small frame house as on Rundell Street. Especially notable are the stone-veneered English cottages. Limestone of various sizes and shapes, flagstone, sandstone, rounded river rock, and "glacier boulders"¹¹ hauled down from Fort Dodge and Strawberry Point were all used to decorate what in many cases are more elaborate structures than rental properties would seem to dictate. Additional research could reveal whether Moffitt built any of these homes on speculation or for sale to known buyers, in addition to his predominant rental housing business.

Recognizable details which indicate a Moffitt-built home are abundant in this area of town. Roof ridge lines often have an upward flare or kick at the gable ends; heavy-looking header beams over windows in stone or brick houses; jettied upper gables, supported apparently by cantilevered beams or posts;

Moffitt himself.

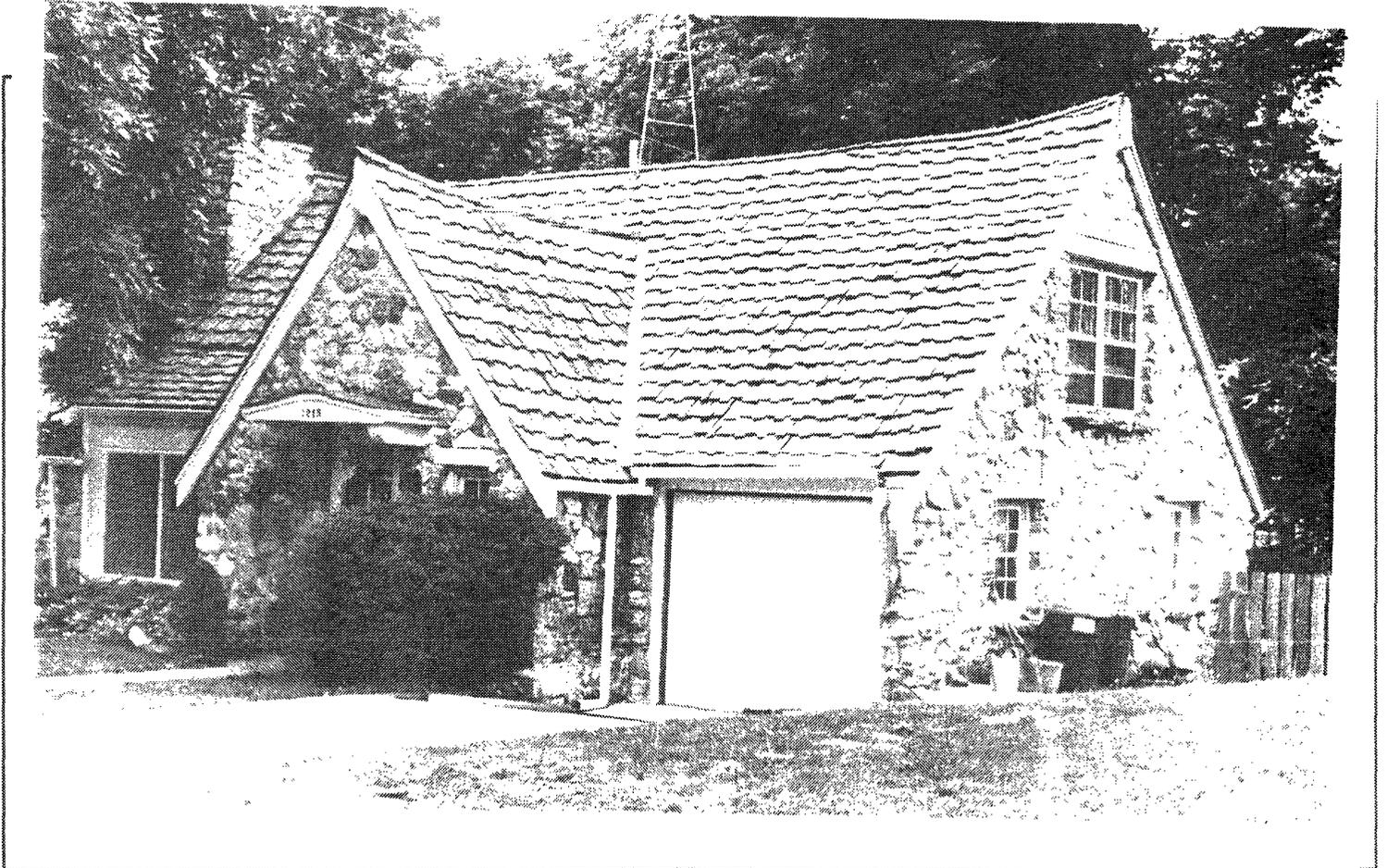
¹¹In the early 1930s, Tom Cross became employed by Moffitt and obtained Lot 30 in Kirkwood Place from him (Moffitt was known to occasionally pay a worker with a used car rather than cash, making it possible Lot 30 was acquired as an exchange for labor). The entire Cross family participated in the construction of the house at 1205 Ginter. Son Ollie Cross was sent north to Fort Dodge to collect rounded "glacier boulders" and the geodes which were cracked open and imbedded in the mortar surrounding the front entrance and the interior fireplace. Daughter Lillian remembers cleaning mortar from bricks to be reused. Their mother landscaped the lot. A rock gazebo structure remains extant in the rear yard (Interviews with Ollie Cross and Lillian Cross Davis, 1988, in P. Miller Collection).

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1215 Pickard St., Iowa City, Iowa. Example of stone-veneered cottage built by Howard Moffitt. Note the upward flare or kick at the ends of the roof ridge. Built in 1939. (East front, north side, photographer facing southwest. J. Nash photograph.)

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drive-under one-stall garages (thought to be the exit ramps for the horse teams which scooped and dragged out the dirt for the basements); stone-veneered front walls which slope outward to enhance the illusion of stacked stone walls.

Though Bert Manville platted the area, Moffitt almost immediately purchased the majority of lots from him. This gave him some control over the landscape or setting of the houses he built, and the lot selection for the stone cottages near the intersection of Pickard and Friendly and to the east of this intersection on Yewell seems to indicate some forethought. They are generally widely spaced (although now infilled with other structures) and the land in this area is rolling and picturesque. Moffitt may have been seeking to enhance the "English cottage" appearance through setting also. In contrast, Moffitt houses on several blocks of flat Rundell Street are lined up like soldiers at attention.

iii. Coralville

A third area where Moffitt is thought to have built houses is on 7th and 8th Avenues in Coralville, a small town west of Iowa City (these towns are contiguous today). Several informants--current or previous owners of Iowa City Moffitt houses--stated Moffitt built in Coralville as well as Iowa City, however research did not verify the origins of these Coralville structures. Rather, houses which strongly conform to the visual characteristics developed from known Iowa City Moffitt structures were identified.¹² The likely Coralville Moffitt houses are located just off the intersection with 5th Street which was also U.S. Highway No. 6.

Not just a suburban development, living in Coralville in the 1930s would have meant commuting between the towns. However the west side of the university campus was greatly expanded in the 1920s, the highway was paved, and these houses in Coralville are as close if not closer than the Rundell

¹²See Section H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods. Visual characteristics developed from inspection of known Moffitt houses can be used as an initial tool for identifying likely Moffitt houses, although often additional research will be needed to confirm a particular structure's origins. Geographic location is also an important factor since certain neighborhoods are known to contain large numbers of the builder's houses. Based on such visual characteristics and location, close to 200 likely Moffitt structures are known to exist. Over 70 of these structures have additional documentation confirming their Moffitt origins. Such documentation consists of owner confirmations, property records, building permits, archival records and/or informant interviews. While the total number of Moffitt houses is likely to exceed 200 structure, only an area-wide intensive inventory is likely to identify and document all of them.

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518 8th Avenue., Coralville, Iowa. Owner-confirmed Moffitt house. Construction date is unknown but probably early 1930s. Styling and scale are similar to houses from this period in the Iowa City Yewell Street area. (East front, photographer facing west. M. Carpenter photograph.)

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Addition or Kirkwood Avenue areas to that campus. No research has been conducted into whether there was industry and commerce in Coralville which could have created a need for rental housing, nor has it been determined whether Moffitt built any of these houses for sale rather than rental.¹³

iv. Geographically Dispersed Moffitt Houses

Houses which exhibit enough of the visual characteristics to be likely Moffitt houses can be found throughout Iowa City, singly and in small clusters of two and three structures. A Craftsman bungalow (1920s) is found on Riverside Drive (also U.S. Highway No. 6) overlooking the Iowa River, the only house on Riverside Court. Incongruous today, this is apparently the only house built in a small unsuccessful development by Moffitt, River View Addition. The house today looks sorely out of place along this busy highway. Nearby land use is almost exclusively commercial and university-related.

Near Iowa City High School, built with W.P.A. funds in 1939, in eastern Iowa City is a brick-veneered residence known to be a Moffitt house, 1726 E. College.¹⁴ This house, built in the mid to late 1930s, exhibits many details shared by Moffitt's brick houses. It is a front-gable and wing, with a drive-under garage in the front gable portion; the roof is steeply pitched; the brick is whitewashed; random bricks protrude from the flat plane of the brick courses. Moffitt also often angled a row of bricks to expose the header ends as ornamentation over doors and windows.

A short distance south of City High is Muscatine Avenue which, between the 1800 and 1900 blocks, forms the north border of a small neighborhood park, Creekside Park. Ralston Creek forms the east border. On the west side of this park, at 1855, 1859 and 1861 Muscatine Avenue, are small houses which bear the visual characteristics of Moffitt houses. Two are frame with Tudor Revival

¹³Especially intriguing are two complexes of structures side-by-side on 7th Avenue (512 and 514 7th Avenue). The same plan appears to be repeated twice, once in brick (ground level) and once in frame. Three nearly free-standing units are positioned to form a squared "U." Two units are placed gables to the front (toward the street) while the third spans the distance between them at the rear of the lot. A wide interior courtyard area is created by this placement. The units are story-and-a-half, with an extremely steep roof pitch and a medieval appearance. Additional documentation to verify these structures as built by Moffitt is necessary.

¹⁴There are indications in the research of Phil Miller, on file at the Iowa City office of the State Historical Society of Iowa, that there are two other Moffitt houses nearby to the north on 7th Avenue and on Lowell Street.

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styling, one is stone-fronted. Just to the east of the park at 1915 Muscatine is a stone house which although easily mistaken for a Moffitt house, was built by Hugh Dunlap.¹⁵

v. 1300 Block of Muscatine Avenue

Another group of Moffitt houses--the "English" cottage style--is located in the 1300 block of Muscatine Avenue at the intersection with East Court Street and is proposed for nomination as a Historic District. Near the Rundell Addition, these houses date to 1939 and 1940, and sit across the street from one of the few remaining operating neighborhood grocery stores--Seaton's market. While they are on the original Rundell streetcar line--still a city bus line--it is unlikely streetcars ever ran past them. Moffitt salvaged the streetcar rails when the company converted to buses in the 30s and used them to support the floors in the cottages.

The cottages' location at this busy intersection marks them as perhaps the best known and most visible of all the Moffitt houses. Thousands of Iowa Citizens, permanent residents and transient students and faculty--only in town for four years of college or until a new teaching position is secured--have passed by these Moffitt houses. They are as imbedded in the memories of passersby as their limestone rocks are imbedded in the mortar. All the distinctive Moffitt elements--the construction methods, the scavenged materials, the picturesque house form, the ornamentation--come together in this cluster of five houses. Their setting, on small strips of a triangular piece of land formed by the angled confluence of Ralston Creek and Muscatine Avenue, has remained unchanged since they were built; their neighborhood has largely remained unchanged; some of the cottages even remain rental properties. The fact that there exists five in a row typifies Moffitt's practice of building rental houses. These five Moffitt-built structures are

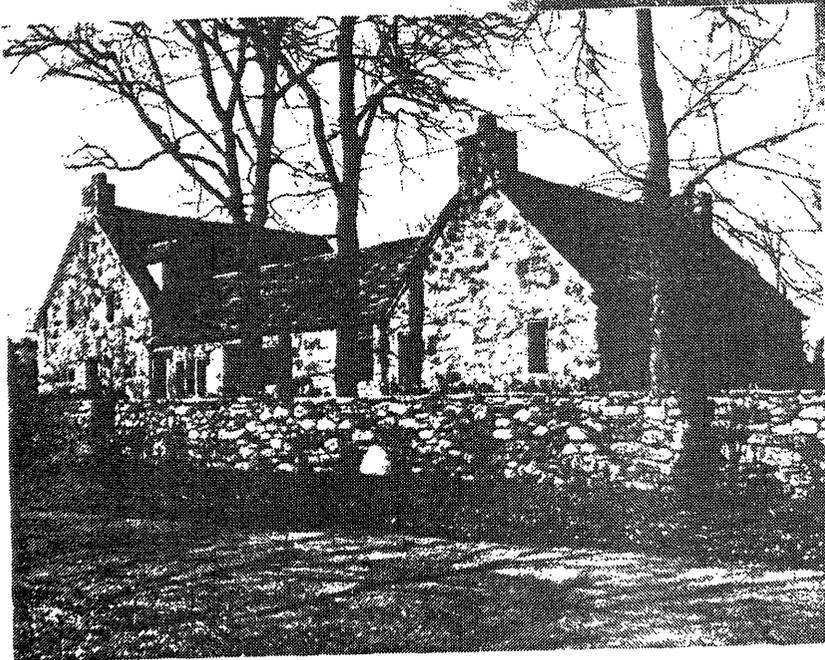
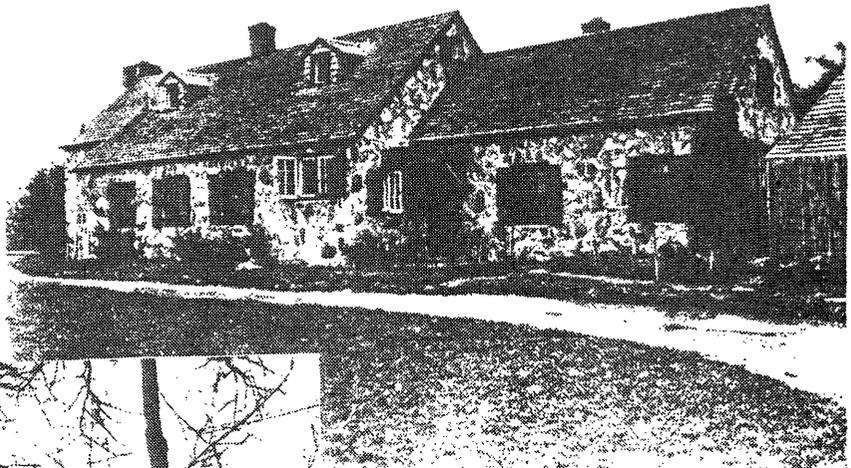
¹⁵Hugh Dunlap, long time Iowa City builder active in the 1920s and 30s, was in the first graduating class (December 1917) in "architectural engineering" under Professor Allen Kimball at what was then called Iowa State College (now Iowa State University) in Ames, Iowa. Dunlap, who is still sharp as a tack at age 97, went to high school with Howard Moffitt and like Moffitt was trained to fly "Jenny biplanes" for World War I. As happened to Moffitt, the war ended just before Dunlap's training. Unlike Moffitt, Dunlap later served in World War II as a naval commander in the Aleutian Islands where at times he provided assistance in the efforts underway to build the Alaskan Highway. Dunlap designed and built a house which could easily be confused for a Moffitt house, at 1915 Muscatine Avenue in Iowa City for a client named Bush. Dunlap hired "an old Swedish guy from Toddville [Iowa]" to do the masonry. The "cobblestones" were collected by the client himself in northern Iowa (Dunlap interview, July 28, 1992).

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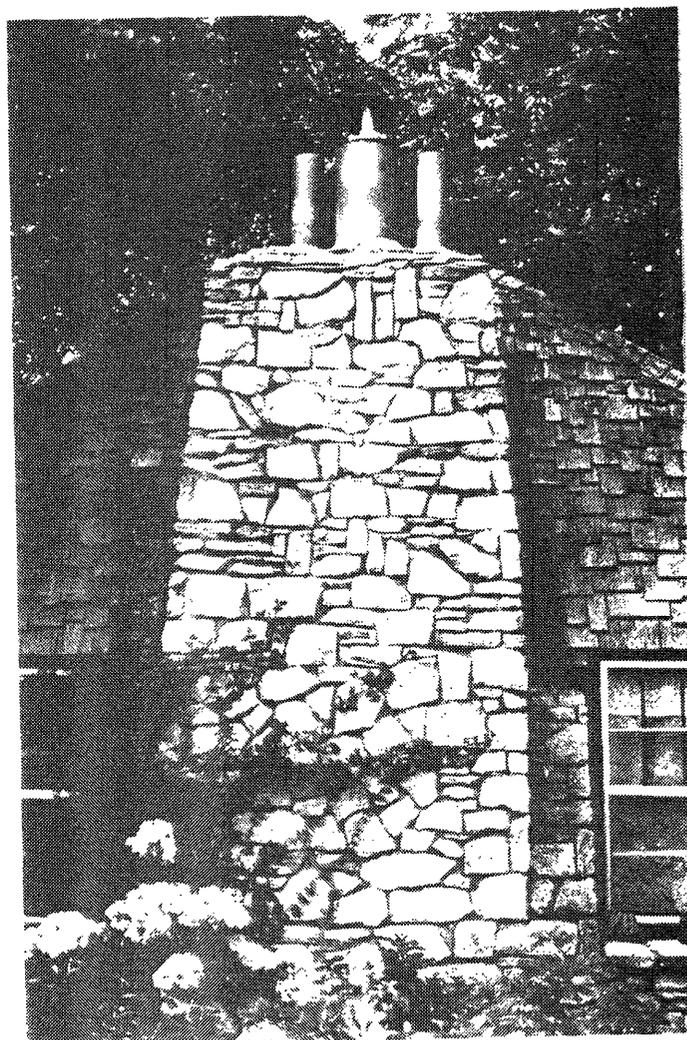
Illustrations taken from an article entitled "Stone at Low Cost" in the October 1935 issue of House Beautiful. The text accompanying these photographs discussed an innovative construction method for using stone ("Stones were placed in these [concrete] forms with their flat sides flush with the outer face of the wall and then concrete was poured in behind them.") Both the style of these houses--Period House "cottages"—and the advocacy of innovative construction techniques would have appealed to Howard Moffitt.

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ABOVE LEFT: Stonework detail from 1326 Muscatine Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa. 1940. (NW corner, J. Nash photograph)

ABOVE RIGHT: Stonework detail of chimney, 1322 Muscatine Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa. 1940 (West front, J. Nash photograph)

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are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a small historic
district.

4. Building Activity Ceases

Moffitt began his building career during a time in which the nation was experiencing a severe housing shortage. After World War I, the decade of the 1920s saw increasing numbers of families which both desired and could now afford to own single-family homes. While other builders in Iowa City responded to the demand for new owner-occupied houses, Howard Moffitt saw and responded to the need for rental houses. When the financial ability of most families to build new houses vanished during the Depression, Moffitt managed to continue building houses to rent. His most distinctive stone cottages were built after 1935, well into the Depression. Labor was cheap and readily available, including skilled labor which had been very scarce and expensive in the boom 20s. Moffitt's frugal and innovative ways and his willingness to engage in diverse business interests at the same time no doubt served to keep him afloat. When the economy geared up for World War II, rent controls placed a ceiling on what Moffitt could charge for his rentals. Failing in his efforts to appeal this ceiling, Moffitt substantially removed himself from the rental business in Iowa City in 1943 and moved out of state. He sold most of his properties on contract, often to the current tenants. A few houses built in Iowa City are connected with Moffitt after 1943, but his efforts were primarily focused on new house construction and real estate development in Texas.

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F. HOUSES, STRUCTURES AND DISTRICTS DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED BY HOWARD F. MOFFITTDescription

Generally:

Residential architecture constructed by Howard F. Moffitt will be both single-family and multi-family structures. Multi-family structures will share a party wall or have attached garages. Size and scale will generally be within the "small house" category, as that term was used in the early 20th century--a three to six room structure, snug and compact appearing on the exterior. Interiors often included built-ins such as a breakfast nook. Lot sizes are often small and irregularly shaped, however some lots with stone-veneered houses on them south of Kirkwood Avenue are double lots. Most often individual structures are clustered in one neighborhood or on adjacent lots along a street, although isolated structures do exist.

Building materials will consist of mixed new and recycled lumber, bricks, stone, and even new and reused nails. Some lumber may have been milled locally and used before it dried. Unusual uses for discarded materials are often employed such as rails used to support floors, sawdust poured between studs to insulate, broken glass in cement, chair back pieces used as exterior ornamentation. Raw materials available for the gathering such as limestone rubble and river rock are common exterior surface finishes.

Houses built at the beginning of the period of significance tend to be frame and evidence Craftsman influence. Period styles predominate later, but are mixed in throughout the entire period of significance. Houses late in the period of significance show the greatest expression of Moffitt's individual style. Stone houses of the mid and late 1930s, especially, exhibit fine and expressive masonry skills.

Chimneys figure prominently in the design of most Moffitt houses throughout the period. Brick chimneys often contain a decorative checkerboard pattern. Roof ridge lines of many houses have an upward flare at the gable ends; jettied upper-story gables are common; drive-under or attached garages are common also. Many facades are veneered with stone which often slope outward from top down.

Most Moffitt-built houses are now owner-occupied and probably have been since the 1940s. As a result the majority appear to be better maintained than might be expected had they remained rental units. Also, they are generally located in single-family, low density neighborhoods which have not changed much since developed. These neighborhoods are beyond the urban inner Iowa

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City area where landlord-owned student rental properties dominate, and the economic cycle of deferred maintenance-demolition-rebuilding negatively impacts existing residential housing.

Property Typology:

While this study is concerned with only one property type, residential structures built by Howard F. Moffitt, his houses are such an eclectic mixture of forms and stylistic influences a typology based on key distinguishing features is helpful. Moffitt borrowed most heavily from two popular styles of the time, Craftsman and Period Houses, but he also freely mixed elements of each to house forms not strictly associated with the style. Therefore, numerous examples of Moffitt houses are united not by style but by some other commonality, a massive prominent chimney or a stone-veneered facade for example. A property typology based on 70 confirmed Moffitt houses is developed below. This typology should be considered a guideline only. It should be expected to change and expand as research in the future, either by individual property owners or through an intensive inventory of Moffitt houses, adds to the body of knowledge on Moffitt's architecture.

Moffitt House Subtypes:

1. Craftsman
2. Period Houses
 - a. Tudor Revival
 - b. English or European vernacular cottage
3. Houses with a Key Distinguishing Feature
 - a. Chimneys
 - b. Stone-veneered facade
 - c. Brick

1. Craftsman details employed by Moffitt include small size and scale, low pitched roof, exposed rafters, knee braces and decorative beams under the eaves. Use of cobblestones and rock in the construction is also consistent with the Craftsman style and most often there is a massive brick chimney. Examples of the Craftsman house are found at 1409 Yewell; 1217 Cottonwood (altered); and 523, 603, 607, 613, 617, 621 Rundell in Iowa City.

2. Period Houses in the (a) Tudor Revival style generally (but not always) have end gables with multiple, steeply pitched front cross gables. Examples are found at 1204, 1210, 1214, 1406, 1411 Yewell; 1610, 1618 Center; and 622, 722, 728 Dearborn in Iowa City.

Period Houses in the (b) English or European vernacular cottage style are small of scale and finished in a variety of stone surfaces, primarily limestone which is abundantly available locally. No house form or roof form

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predominates. Rather, it is the stone surface which gives each house its character. Examples appear at 1322, 1324, 1326, 1328 and 1330 Muscatine Avenue (nominated as a Historic District); 1215, 1217 Pickard; 1202, 1217 Friendly; 1531 Center; and 431 Friendly.

3. Other Moffitt houses with shared distinguishing features (not otherwise Craftsman or Period Houses) include (a) small houses with massive chimneys prominently located on the facade or sides. These houses may be more than one story, but they still project a compact appearance. Examples are located 1302, 1305, 1310, 1403 Yewell; 611-613 (duplex), 701 7th Avenue; 618, 712 Dearborn; and 614 Rundell in Iowa City. Also, 518 8th Avenue, Coralville.

Other Moffitt houses have a (b) stone-veneered front wall giving them a cottage appearance. Examples are found at 1213, 1402, 1429 Yewell; 1123 Cottonwood; 1211, 1215, 1218 Highland; 709 (formerly 711) 7th Avenue; and 522, 738 (formerly 736) Rundell in Iowa City.

(c) Brick houses built by Moffitt constitute a third type of house with a share distinguishing characteristic. Many of these houses share a similar house form, gable end with an asymmetrical front cross gable. The drive under garage is under the front cross gable. Examples of Moffitt's brick houses are at 1111 Friendly; 1215, 1406 Yewell; 837 Kirkwood (Moffitt's own residence); 841-843 Summit (duplex); 1726 E. College; and 713 7th Avenue in Iowa City.

Confirmed Moffitt houses include: In Coralville, 518 8th Avenue; in Iowa City, 611-613, 701, 709, 713 7th Avenue; 1531, 1610, 1617, 1618 Center; 1123, 1217 Cottonwood; 618, 622, 712, 718 Dearborn; 1726 E. College; 1012, 1025, 1111, 1202, 1203, 1217 Friendly; 1219, 1223 Ginter; 1209, 1211, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1217, 1218 Highland; 837 Kirkwood Avenue; 1133 Kirkwood Court; 1215, 1217 Pickard; 1404 Ridge; 431, 515, 522, 523, 528, 603, 607, 608, 613, 614, 617, 621, 728, 732, 738 Rundell; 1204, 1206, 1209, 1210, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1217, 1301, 1302, 1305, 1310, 1325, 1401, 1402, 1403, 1406, 1409, 1411, 1429 Yewell.

Significance

Howard Moffitt's houses represent a local adaptation of a popular nationwide trend away from the commodious homes of the Victorian era in favor of smaller more efficient suburban houses. Moffitt's understanding of the market he served in Iowa City and of what images appealed to his renters, resulted in a housing type which gives special character to the older residential neighborhoods of Iowa City. Snug, cozy, charming--all terms originally applied to describe the ideal small house of the 20s and 30s--still describe Moffitt's houses. While finished in a variety of materials and styles, Craftsman and Period Houses predominate, with Tudor Revival and

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Confirmed Moffitt houses include:

In Coralville:

518 8th Avenue

In Iowa City:

611-613, 701, 709, 713 7th Avenue

1531, 1610, 1617, 1618 Center

1123, 1217 Cottonwood

618, 622, 712, 718 Dearborn

1726 E. College

1012, 1025, 1111, 1202, 1203, 1217 Friendly

1219, 1223 Ginter

1209, 1211, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1217, 1218 Highland

837 Kirkwood Avenue

1133 Kirkwood Court

1215, 1217 Pickard

1404 Ridge

431, 515, 522, 523, 528, 603, 607, 608, 613, 614, 617, 621, 728, 732,
738 Rundell

1204, 1206, 1209, 1210, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1217, 1301, 1302, 1305, 1310,
1325, 1401, 1402, 1403, 1406, 1409, 1411, 1429 Yewell

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English or European vernacular stone cottages especially abundant.

Registration Requirements

Consideration of Moffitt houses for National Register eligibility will focus primarily on Criterion C. To qualify, a structure should be documented to have been built by Howard F. Moffitt. It should be a single-family structure or multi-family complex which evidences the size and scale typical of the majority of rental units built between 1924 and 1943. Stylistic details should clearly indicate Craftsman or a Period house influence and additionally should reflect the builder's idiosyncratic ornamentation. Individual structures should retain integrity of design, materials and workmanship. Integrity of location, feeling and association of the Craftsman-influenced houses is enhanced by their proximate relation to each other and must be maintained to retain eligibility as a historic district under Criterion C. Individual Period houses evidencing an English or European vernacular cottage appearance should evidence little alteration to be individually eligible under Criterion C. However, where alterations, such as a filled in drive-under basement or the addition of a roof dormer, do not as a whole detract from the overall cottage appearance, integrity may be retained. Integrity of setting and association of the Period houses is enhanced by other unaltered Moffitt houses nearby, but isolated structures otherwise significant and showing integrity of design, materials and workmanship are not ineligible under Criterion C because of their isolation from other Moffitt houses.

Criterion A evaluation will focus on the ability of groups or clusters of small homes built by Moffitt to exemplify the small-homes movement of the early 20th-century and the shift toward suburban residential living. Structures should exhibit little alteration, although enclosure of garages and the addition of dormers--common alterations intended to accommodate growing suburban families--do not necessarily automatically result in ineligibility if the alterations are sensitive to the overall character of the structure or appear to be easily reversible. Historic districts, rather than individual structures, will generally better express the context under Criterion A, and therefore should contain little if any recent infill construction. Integrity of feeling, setting, and association is enhanced by an overall landscape which reflect early 20th-century suburban design and by the size, scale and presence of streets, yards, sidewalks, plantings, and other objects which reflect suburban living.

There does not appear to be significant potential for eligibility under Criterion B or Criterion D.

While no relocated Moffitt house has been discovered, a house which is individually significant may remain eligible for the National Register if

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it retains a high degree of integrity of design, workmanship and materials. With Howard Moffitt's penchant for reusing materials and his willingness to experiment, it might be expected that he even moved a house himself. Eligibility of a such a structure for the National Register is not automatically destroyed, and may even be enhanced by a relocation under Moffitt's own direction.

G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The corporate city limits of Iowa City, Iowa, and Coralville, Iowa.

H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

The multiple property listing of small homes built by Howard F. Moffitt has been conducted under the auspices of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Historic Preservation Bureau, and is based upon archival research, field inspection activities, and the Individual National Register nomination papers and supporting research prepared by Philip Miller and Julia Kellman for their Moffitt house at 1322 Muscatine Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa. National Register review comments on this individual nomination indicate it was returned because of the numbers and location of similar examples. However, the research conducted for this nomination was exhaustive and included dozens of interviews over several years of individuals who had some connection to Howard Moffitt. Many of these individuals were quite elderly when the interview was conducted and are now deceased. Mr. Miller and Ms. Kellman compiled and preserved for future researchers an enormous amount of detailed information which few budgets could have afforded, including lists of Moffitt house addresses, photographs, taped interviews, newspaper clippings. Preparation of this multiple property listing was greatly assisted by those materials in the Phil Miller Collection, now donated to the State Historical Society of Iowa.

Work was completed for this multiple property listing in June, July, and August, 1992, by Jan Nash who holds an M.A. in American Studies and a J.D. from the University of Iowa, and Matthew Carpenter, who holds an M.A. in History from the University of Iowa. Ms. Nash conducted the archival research, data collection, and a portion of the field work, and formulated the historic context from this research. Based on physical inspection of known models of Moffitt houses, characteristics which would indicate a likely Moffitt house were determined. Geographic location was considered as well, since certain neighborhoods were known to contain large numbers of the builder's houses. Photographs then were taken of all known Moffitt houses and each likely Moffitt house. A bias towards inclusion rather than omission of a house was followed, and no attempt was made to verify through property records or other research the precise lineage of each likely Moffitt house photographed. Mr. Carpenter conducted the majority of the fieldwork, mapped

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the structures and additionally was involved in a portion of the archival research.

One historic context was developed to correspond with the period of house construction Moffitt engaged in between the two world wars. These structures are related by theme, place and time and dividing them into smaller units--just the stone houses for example--would have been too narrow. Methods, materials, styles and the local conditions under which Moffitt worked all overlap and are intertwined during the entire time period. One property type is defined--residential structures--but discussion of the property type in the context is organized around geographic areas. A Historic District nomination was prepared in connection with the multiple property listing for the five contiguous stone cottages in the 1300 block of Muscatine Avenue, including the Phil Miller/Julia Kellman structure at 1322 Muscatine (though the couple no longer owns the property). This was done partially because of the availability of research previously completed on the one structure. More important is the significance of these particular structures to the historic context, their ability to express the relationship between the Howard Moffitt's building practice and his impact on the residential character of Iowa City, and the high degree of integrity exhibited by this cluster of houses.

It is expected that additional research focusing on specific structures will result in future nominations, both as individual resources and as historic districts. Potential districts include several blocks of Rundell Avenue, and portions of the Friendly, Yewell and Pickard area. Individual nominations might focus on the stone houses exhibiting the finest masonry skills and the most unique building materials and methods, or the best stylistic examples of Moffitt's Period houses.

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Also *The Palimpsest* (Winter 1992): Phil Miller, "Howard Moffitt's Small Homes and Stone Cottages," 147-156; Jan Nash "The Shift to Small Homes: Moffitt Houses in a Local and National Context," 156-158; Jeff Schabilion, "16th Century and Ahead of its Time" 159-160; Linda Brown-Link, "Affordable Housing and True Artistry" 160.