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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "NA" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ash Park Historic District
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 5th-7th Aves N bet 6th & 8th Sts NW N/A not for publication
city, town Mt. Vernon N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Linn code 113 zip code 52314

3. Classification

| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <u>32</u> | <u>10</u> buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | _____ | _____ sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-state | <input type="checkbox"/> site | _____ | _____ structures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | _____ | _____ objects |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | <u>32</u> | <u>10</u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: Hist Resources of Mt Vernon, Iowa
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

David [Signature] _____ Date 6/10/93
Signature of certifying official
State Historical Society of Iowa

State or Federal agency and bureau
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:) _____

Entered in the National Register

Richard Byers _____ Date 8/13/93

[Signature] _____ Date of Action _____
Signature of the Keeper

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwellings

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwellings

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

Late 19th & 20th century revivals

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls wood/weatherboard

roof asphalt

other wood/shingle

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 7, page 1.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1895-1919

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hartung, Daniel C.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 8, page 1.

9: Major Bibliographical References

[X] See continuation sheet, section 9, page 1.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 17.7

UTM References

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| A | 1 5 | 6 3 0 7 7 0 | 4 6 4 2 8 6 0 | B | 1 5 | 6 3 1 0 9 0 | 4 6 4 2 8 6 0 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| C | 1 5 | 6 3 1 0 9 0 | 4 6 4 2 6 4 0 | D | 1 5 | 6 3 0 7 8 0 | 4 6 4 2 6 4 0 |

[] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

11. Form Prepared By

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| name/title | Barbara Beving Long, consultant | date | May 23, 1993 |
| organization | Four Mile Research Company | telephone | (319) 547-4344 |
| street & number | 315 N. Elm Street | state | Iowa |
| city or town | Cresco | zip code | 52136 |

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Continuation Sheet

ASH PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
LINN COUNTY, IOWA

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Characteristics

Located at the north edge of Mount Vernon along the railroad tracks, the Ash Park district is a visually cohesive, relatively unaltered residential district associated with a key period in community development, the railroad era. As befits a residential district from the railroad era, a number of motifs and decorative features represented throughout the district were commercially fabricated and brought in using rail service, including turned porch columns, wood shingles in various shapes, brackets, and pendants. In addition, the house designs reflect an awareness and application of patternbook designs, marking a departure from vernacular or traditional building preferences in the community. A major unifying element is the preponderance of wood frame, clapboarded two story dwellings dating from the turn of the century. Of similar age, scale, siting, and materials, the houses reflect several stylistic influences, including the Stick Style, Shingle Style, Colonial Revival, transitional (Colonial Revival and Queen Anne), and Craftsman. Key examples display such important features as bold shapes (dormers and towers), welcoming front porches, and decorative stickwork and shingling. While distinctive, these features are also characteristic of the overall qualities within the district. Many of the 48 houses have gables of some sort, decorative shinglework in gable ends, applied wood strips, and stone foundations.

The location, arrangement, and appearance of the Ash Park district underscores its associations with the railroad era in Mount Vernon. Streets are aligned with the cardinal directions--in contrast with older platting which follows the original town plat--and there is a clear and strong visual break between old and new. In addition, the railroad tracks are located at the north end of the district, recalling the significant changes rail service brought to the community and Ash Park's associations with that period.

The Ash Park district consists 42 residences within a roughly rectangular sector. Most houses are arrayed along three north-south streets, with limited construction facing the three east-west streets that run through the district. Mature trees line the streets. Houses occupy from one to three lots, and, while not densely packed, the district conveys a sense of appropriately sized settings for an attractive collection of similarly scaled dwellings. (See photos 1 and 2.)

The dominant impression is that of a middle-class neighborhood whose residents respect the inherent architectural qualities of

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their homes. For example, 17 residences are painted using two to three appropriate colors which highlight architectural features. Corner boards, decorative shingles, applied wood strips, and other details are accented using shades of cream, tan, green, and russet (and others).

Design Sources

Despite considerable research (1988 survey and newspapers), little information has come to light regarding specific design sources. Based on their similar appearance, it appears that four houses in the district may be the product of one local (but still unknown) builder. (See house numbers 15, 31, 35, 39 in the Building List below and photos 4 and 5.) A local newspaper article listed the many clients local builder Charles Heller had over the years. While one (Sargent) owned a house in the district, it is not clear if Heller was the builder, since the Sargents owned several properties. One builder is known to have lived in the district, Daniel C. Hartung (703 7th Ave. N., #46), and it is likely he constructed his home in 1902 and perhaps that of Charles M. Hartung (615 5th Ave. N., #3) in 1901. In addition, a newspaper item identified Daniel Hartung as the builder for the Harry Kelly House (2) at 610 5th Ave. N. (photo 8).

Unifying Features

Nearly three-fourths (73.8 percent) of the houses in Ash Park were built in the first two decades of the 20th century, an important factor in the visual cohesiveness of the district. Construction was evenly divided between these two decades. The district was platted in 1893, and there are five examples dating from the initial late 1890s period of development. Construction in Ash Park ceased with the end of World War I and related economic depression in Iowa, and there was no new construction until the mid-1950s. Five houses scattered through the district are less than fifty years of age.

In addition to the shared period of construction, the materials, scale, massing, and ornamentation represented in the district contribute strongly to its unified appearance. By far, most of the houses have two stories, are sheathed in clapboard (some using two widths), and have stone foundations and limited wood shingle trim (especially in the gable ends). Most examples are gabled (cross-, tee-, or ell-shaped), and there are also several hipped roof examples. A majority of the homes have welcoming front porches with pleasing wood balustrades, and many have front or side bays,

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often chamfered with pendants and other detail. Eleven homes have two story rear sleeping porches, apparently 1920s- or 1930s-era additions. Two examples, 703 6th Ave. N (30) and 615 N.W. 6th St. (34) have distinctive corner towers. Bold shapes--huge dormers, towers, bays--characterize the district.

Stylistic influences are generally diluted and include Colonial Revival, Stick Style, Shingle Style, Four Square, Craftsman, one example with Adamesque decoration, and one Transitional example exhibiting Queen Anne massing and Colonial Revival detail. Colonial Revival influences--dentils, multiple pane windows, smooth round porch columns, keystones--are well represented, with seven examples. Stick Style detail adorns many of the houses and consists of curving wood strips and wood shingle, sometimes decorated verge boards, at the gable ends. The Ash Park district displays typical stylistic preferences from the turn-of-the-century in Mount Vernon.

One of the key features of the district is its overall visual cohesiveness. However, several examples stand out as particularly interesting designs. The house at 717 6th Ave. N. (27) exhibits important Shingle Style influences, including a conspicuous polygonal front dormer and an unusually large front porch. With its series of gabled bays and dormers and porches, the hipped roof house at 716 6th Ave. N. (24) also ranks as a fine example in the district. The dwelling at 610 5th Ave. N. (2) is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival influences represented. With its unique Adamesque detail--swags and floral displays--the house at 724 5th Ave. N. (6) is also notable. The Stick Style house at 703 6th Ave. N. (30) features a prominent polygonal bay. (See photos 2, 7, 8, 6, and 3, respectively.) While these examples are distinctive, they are also representative of many of the distinguishing features of the district as a whole.

General Condition

Modern intrusions are few and consist of five one story houses. All are of suitable size, scale, color, and materials so that they are not visually dominant or intrusive. By far, clapboard is the favored wall surface throughout the district, with 25 of 42 examples. In addition, there are five houses with appropriately narrow replacement siding which do not detract from the visual cohesiveness of the district. It appears that, in most cases, houses with replacement siding have been treated with some care to retain original window openings and ornamentation. Of the 42 houses, 32 contribute to the unified appearance of the district and

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10 are noncontributing, either because of recent construction and appearance or because of alterations.

Boundaries

The heart of the Ash Park plat was developed at the turn of the century and can be distinguished from surrounding properties on a number of fronts. The timing of initial plat development and its primary historical development relate directly to an important historic context for Mount Vernon, the railroad era. However, portions of the north and west edges of the plat do not share this relationship with properties properly constituting the heart of the district. Visual barriers and obvious changes in character mark these differences. Because of these changes, the entire plat is not being nominated and plat boundaries are not the same as district boundaries. (See map.)

On the north edge of the district (N.W. 8th Street) there is a clear break in house siting, age and style. While most houses in the heart of the district face east or west, the ten houses on the north side of N.W. 8th Street face south. Most (nine) are less than fifty years of age and are variations of gable-side ranch style dwellings. A factor in this late development likely is the presence of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad tracks which run directly along the back lot line of these properties.

On both sides of the north end of 7th Avenue North there is a marked change in character, for there is a cluster of five noncontributing properties. Since this is a peripheral area at the end of the district which no longer retains integrity, it does not contribute to the significance to the district and is therefore not included within district boundaries.

On the west edge of the district, houses along 8th Avenue North turn away from the rest of the plat to face the Cornell College campus. The eight houses are nearly as diverse in stylistic influences as they are in number, with Prairie School, Tudor Revival, Greek Revival, and modern ranch among the styles displayed. Thus, there is a marked visual change in the character of this area. The eight houses--several of which are distinctive and excellent examples of Mount Vernon residential architecture--are part of the Cornell College Historic District. This is appropriate, given the visual, locational, and historical associations of the houses.

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Sixth Street marks a clear visual change between earlier additions to Mount Vernon and the Ash Park plat. Previous plats continued the pattern established by the original town plat. In contrast, Ash Park is oriented following the cardinal directions, and it aptly follows the pattern of the rail line as well. The change is abrupt and obvious, with triangular planting spaces and lots in the older portion abutting the new, railroad-related Ash Park plat. The east boundary of the historic district is the legal edge of the plat. Residential development continues east of Ash Park, but it is of a different character, having considerable modern intrusions. These additions lack the cohesive visual appearance and appeal of Ash Park.

Building List

Unless stated otherwise, the houses described below have metal storm windows. Most houses have a detached garage on the property which is not intrusive in terms of scale, materials, and placement. Exceptions are noted below. Because of their modest size and generally unintrusive locations on the lots, these garages and other outbuildings were not counted as either contributing or noncontributing buildings. There are no vacant lots and no recognizable carriage houses or summer kitchens.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map coverage did not extend to Ash Park during times which would aid in understanding the time and rate of district development. Data regarding individual houses, including probable date of construction, is based primarily on abstracts, the Mount Vernon Historic Resources Data Base, earlier surveys, the 1947 Mt. Vernon centennial history, and visual assessments. Information regarding Charles Heller is from "Charles Heller, Builder," *Mount Vernon Record*, February 4, 1920. Mount Vernon residents were responsible for assembling historical documentation on Ash Park and its houses for this nomination as part of a Certified Local Government matching grant.

5th Avenue North

- 01 **608 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. The E.H. and Jennie E. Morrow House was built c. 1912. Like others in the district, the two story house has a stone foundation, scalloped pattern wood shingle in gable ends, clapboard siding, and a crossed gable form. Paint colors are appropriate: cream clapboard with dark cream and russet trim. Alterations are unintrusive and acceptable and consist of an offset one story garage addition and porch

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alterations. According to the present owners, the abstract shows a jump in property value after 1912 when the Morrors bought it; in 1915 they sold it to Bertha A. Walters.

02 **610 5th Ave. N.** KEY Contributing. The Harry Kelly House dates from 1901. In common with others in the district, the house has a stone foundation, clapboard sheathing, and wood shingle trim. Two story and hipped roofed, it is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival influences displayed in the district. These influences are reflected in the dentiled cornice, symmetric arrangement of windows, and gabled centered dormer with three diamond pattern windows. Other notable features are the continuous lintel for the second story windows and the well proportioned and unaltered front porch. Porch columns are squared and have simple moulded capitals which feature a space between some of the moulded courses, an effect repeated on several other district houses. The house appears to be unaltered, but a 1930s-era two story sleeping porch addition has been unobtrusively affixed to the rear. The first owner, Professor Harry M. Kelly, taught biology at Cornell College from 1894 until his death in 1936; he purchased this property in 1901. Kelly was active in the community, serving as the first manager of the local telephone company in 1902. He was involved with the Business Men's Commercial Club and a devoted Sunday school teacher. According to an April 11, 1902 item in the local newspaper, D.C. Hartung (who also lived in Ash Park) was the builder for the Kelly House. (See photo 8.)

03 **616 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. The William S. Ebersole House was built in 1901. Characteristics of the house which also contribute to the architectural unity of the district include the presence of two stories, clapboarding, hipped roof, stone foundation, and Colonial Revival detail. The present attractive elliptical fanlight entry and small hipped roof front bay reportedly replaced a front porch. These modifications appear to date from the 1930s or 1940s (as does the two story rear sleeping porch addition); they complement the original scale, materials, and details. Other notable elements include hipped dormers (now with ventilator panels and narrow replacement siding), a continuous simple course which also acts as a lintel for the windows, leaded glass staircase window, and a large gabled side bay which pierces the roofline. This side bay has large cornice returns and is chamfered at the first

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story level. Another alteration is the presence of an older (1930s?) very small, truncated hipped roof garage addition at the side rear. The first owner, Dr. Ebersole, taught Latin at Cornell College. He served as interim acting president of the college in 1922-23. Upon his death in 1952, Cornell College received the property, selling it three years later.

- 04** **708 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. The First H.S. Risser House was built in 1915. The two story, gable-front house exhibits Craftsman stylistic detail, including windows with vertical muntins, one story front porch with broad roof pitch, and vertical strips applied over the clapboard in the gable ends. The porch has simple squared balusters and squared columns. Like others in the district, the house has a two story rear sleeping porch, which appears to be original. A double gabled garage is located unobtrusively on the lot. There are no apparent alterations. In 1915, Mr. Risser built this house and sold it three years later. Risser was active in the Rotary and involved with community projects, especially during World War I.
- 05** **710 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. The Second H.S. Risser House was built in 1918. The two story, gable-front house exhibits Colonial Revival (such as very deep cornice returns) and also Craftsman stylistic detail, including a broad Craftsman roof pitch for the gable front porch, squared wood columns and a clapboard porch skirt. Clapboarding is narrower in the gable ends than on the primary wall surface. Like others in the district, the house has a two story rear sleeping porch, which appears to be original in this case. Alterations are confined to a small unobtrusive rear deck. After he built adjacent 708 in 1915, Mr. Risser built this house and lived here.
- 06** **724 5th Ave. N.** KEY contributing. Built in 1910, the Cornell Faculty House was moved to this site in 1935. Painted light gold with dark gold and dull orange trim, the two story house has a steep hipped roof, clapboard siding, and a stone foundation. A series of elements--prominent polygonal bays, large porch, and a barrel-roofed heavily moulded front dormer having sawtooth wood shingle--result in an irregular outline consisting of bold shapes. In contrast, notable details are of delicate scale and include pleasing swags and other organic Adamesque detail (especially on the bays, dormers and cornice) and delicate

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leaded windows in an oval spider web pattern. The porch, which is located at the side rather than across the front, has round columns and delicate but simple balusters. Alterations are minimal and include a small unintrusive rear porch. Reportedly built by a banker around 1910, the house was moved by Cornell College to this site around 1935. The college needed the original site for construction of Merner Hall, which was built in 1936. Various faculty members rented the house from Cornell until 1973 when it was sold. (See photo 6.)

- 07** **732 5th Ave. N.** Noncontributing. The one-story gable-side ranch house is less than 50 years of age (built c. 1960) and does not contribute to the architectural character of the district. However, its gabled roofline and beige siding are not overtly intrusive.
- 08** **725 5th Ave. N.** Noncontributing. The house dates from the 1910s. It is two story and has a one story gable-front porch with bold flaring rafter ends and a brick base. In addition to the porch treatment, Craftsman Style details include vertical muntins. Alterations have marred the original appearance and include wide replacement siding, a rather prominent solar collector, and an intrusively placed modern detached double garage. Chet Rich reportedly was the first owner.
- 09** **719 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. The E. Ray Lahman House was built in 1912. This two story gable-front house has a one story flat-roofed front porch and clapboard siding painted dark reddish brown (as is the targeted foundation). Porch columns and balustrades are slender and simple, and a small dentiled cornice adorns the porch. Following a fire in 1955, the top portion of the house was rebuilt without eaves or overhang. Despite this change in roofline features, the scale, materials, porch, and overall form of the house render it a contributing element in the district. Lahman bought the property in 1912 for \$4,000; his daughter states that the house, which remained in the family until 1955, was built in that year.
- 10** **715 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. Built in 1905, the two story gable-front house has large gabled dormers piercing the roofline on both sides, a prominent red brick side chimney, and a squared bay on one side. Wood shingle adorns the dormers, and the main wall surface is clapboard-

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ing. A visually appropriate one story rear addition has clapboard siding and a concrete block foundation. Other alterations include replacement windows in a small side bay and a small non-original partly enclosed (with clapboarding) front porch. The porch has a stone foundation, wrought iron columns and a simple flat roof.

- 11** **707 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. The James and Emily Finton house was built c. 1910. Another two story essentially gable-front house (with intersecting gabled wing to rear), this example features a welcoming hipped-roof porch with simple slender columns and narrow balusters and very narrow clapboard siding (painted mushroom color with white and maroon trim). Windows have simple but unusually wide surrounds. There have been several sympathetically designed additions to the rear, including a two story polygonal addition (1992) on one rear corner, a one story flat-roofed addition on the opposite rear corner, and a gazebo at the rear. Based on an increase in property value (shown on the abstract) when Elma King, widow, bought the house in 1913 from James and Emily Finton, it appears the Fintons built the house c. 1910. In addition, the legal description changed in 1910 to reflect the current description.
- 12** **703 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. Built c. 1910, the two story hipped-roof house has prominent gabled dormers on the front and either side. Wood shingle decorates these dormers, window lintels are simple and moulded, and there are corner boards. The foundation consists of very rough stone, and the clapboard is painted light cream with white trim. The hipped roof porch which spans the front displays slender columns but no balustrade, and there is also an attractive side rear porch. A visually appropriate rear addition is one story and contains the garage.
- 13** **615 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. The house was built in 1901. Two story and gable-side, the house has a prominent and heavy gabled front dormer which dominates the design. This inset dormer features decorative wood shingle and a small semi-circular window within an overhanging pent "supported" by slender brackets and surrounded with heavy moulding. Below this prominent triangular space are two bays, each with a double-hung window. The dormer and roof treatment continue forward to form the porch roof which now rests on too-slender wrought iron porch columns. The porch

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flooring has been removed, but it and more suitable columns could readily be re-installed. Other alterations include vertical paneling at the porch, and a rear garage addition and two story hipped roof sleeping porch addition, both likely from the 1920s. The use of bold shapes continues on the gable sides which have decorative wood shingle, extremely deep cornice returns, and more small brackets. Very narrow clapboarding is used, which contrasts interestingly with the strong shapes. The prominence of the shapes offsets the porch alterations and renders the building a contributing element in the district. The house was built shortly after Charles M. Hartung bought the property in 1900. The family sold the house in 1915.

14 **609 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. Built in 1910, the house consists of two stories topped by a truncated hipped roof. There is a single centered gabled dormer and a prominent brick side chimney. Like many of the houses in the district, this example has a stone foundation and a two story sleeping porch at the rear. A small hipped roof porch does not span the front and has very slender spindle columns and matching balustrade. Alterations are unintrusive and in keeping with the scale and original details of the house: narrow dove grey replacement siding. W.W. Carlton likely built the house in 1910.

15 **603 5th Ave. N.** Contributing. The house was built in 1897. With its two story cross-gable shape and lower extensions at the points of intersection, stone foundation, and chamfered side bay with pendants and other ornamentation, the house is similar to several others in the district which appear to have been the product of an unknown local builder. Like other examples, this house has additional useful "infill" where the tall and narrow gabled portions cross; this infill space provides for an extended enclosed entry space on one side and for additional parlor space on the other. Another notable feature are the gable ends, which have curving wood strips and scallop shingle and decorated verge boards. The gable end and porch treatments reflect a Stick Style influence. Both the small front porch and a longer side rear porch have distinctive detail, including long and elaborate brackets. Alterations have occurred over time: two story sleeping porch addition to rear (probably in the 1920s), and modern garage having narrow siding is close to house. The paint color scheme for the clapboard is appropriate: medium tan with cream

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and dark green trim. A \$2,600 mortgage was taken out in 1897 by W.W. Carlton, and it appears the house was built at that time. An undated historic (probably 1930s) photograph shows the house is virtually unchanged. (See photos 1 and 4.)

- 16 **511 N.W. 6th St.** Noncontributing. Build in the 1910s, the modest and altered dwelling is 1 1/2 stories and gable-front with side hipped dormers. The hipped roof porch has simple squared columns which rest on a formerly clapboard porch enclosure. Alterations include simulated stone siding applied to the porch enclosure and wide tan replacement siding elsewhere.
- 17 **525 N.W. 6th St.** Contributing. Dating from c. 1897, the two story clapboard-sheathed house has a prominent front-facing gable and an intersecting gabled portion, forming an ell-shape. Like others in the district, the house has boldly chamfered corners on a side bay, decorative brackets and pendants at the chamfers, and a stone foundation. The alteration to the front facade is of proper scale and reversible: deck with balustrade has replaced front porch. At one side rear is a small shed-roofed garage, and a deck wraps around the other side rear corner. Neither of these side rear changes is intrusive in scale, placement, or materials. In 1896 Thomas Wilkinson acquired title to the property from the platters; he sold it to Jessie Williams in 1904, who owned the property until 1927. It appears Wilkinson built the house shortly after 1896.
- 18 **606 6th Ave. N.** Noncontributing. Built c. 1895, the large two story house has a complex roofline consisting of a series of gabled and hipped portions, including a large front-facing gable. While the application of narrow replacement siding is often acceptable, it appears that any original detail was removed in the process in this instance. There is now a small shed-roofed canopy extension marking the front door.
- 19 **616 6th Ave. N.** Noncontributing. The c. 1900 house is two story and T-shaped. There are a series of one story extensions to the rear. Alterations include the application of narrow siding and a prominent two story sleeping porch addition (with open porch below) affixed to the front-facing gable. The present owners state the house was initially one room which has been added to over the years.

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The prominence of the addition as well as the absence of original detail render the house a noncontributing element in the district.

- 20** **620 6th Ave. N.** Noncontributing. Dating from c. 1910, the two story hipped roof house has simple moulded upper story windows whose lintels meet a plain entablature. There is a small side bay. Alterations include narrow grey replacement siding, wrought iron porch columns and railings, a front window that has been made smaller, and a one story hipped roof garage addition at the side. This addition is flush with the front facade of the house and therefore rather prominent. The quality and location of the changes result in a noncontributing standing in the district.
- 21** **702 6th Ave. N.** Contributing. Built c. 1900, the two story clapboard cross-gable house displays Stick Style detail in the gable ends: simple wood strips and decorative wood shingle. Like others in the district, there is a two story chamfered side bay. Alterations are acceptable and consist of an enclosed entry porch, rear two story garage addition, and a small side deck. J.D. Hann purchased the property in 1896 from C. Whittemore for \$500 and built the house soon thereafter.
- 22** **515 N.W. 7th St.** Noncontributing. House. 1955. The modern one story house has wide siding and is gable-side in configuration, with an additional front gable marking the entrance. Small in scale, the house is unintrusive within the district but of modern construction.
- 23** **712 6th Ave. N.** Contributing. The W.H. and Ella Hand House was built around 1907. Two story and covered with clapboard, it displays Colonial Revival influences, including multiple pane windows, smooth round porch columns, and a pediment marking the porch entry. There is a hipped roof with additional gables or gabled dormers, and they have decorative wood shingle and multiple pane windows. Two shades of cream--the trim is lighter--have been used to good effect. Unlike most examples, the house has its original windows, and they consist of four large panes. There appear to be no alterations. According to the abstract, the house was built after 1906 when the Hands bought the property for \$1500 and by 1908 when they sold it for \$3600.

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- 24 **716 6th Ave. N.** KEY Contributing. The commodious house was built c. 1901. Two story, it has a hipped roof and also a series of gabled bays and dormers. Multiple intersecting hipped portions allow for a small inset porch on the second story, and there is also a small shed-roofed bay to one side to further contribute to the irregular shape. The main porch, which extends along the front and around one side, has small squared fluted columns with simple moulded capitals. Unusual vertical strips on the capitals recall the fluting of the columns. The clapboard is painted dark cream, the trim is light cream, and a mocha shade calls attention to the wood shingle in the gable ends. The house likely was built around 1901 when N.B. Twogood was the owner. (See photo 7.)
- 25 **518 N.W. 8th St.** Noncontributing. The one story hipped roof rectangular ranch style house is a modern intrusion in the district and was built in 1970. However, it is relatively unintrusive in terms of color and size.
- 26 **510 N.W. 8th St.** Noncontributing. Built in 1975, the one story gable-side house is a modern intrusion in the district. However, it is relatively unintrusive in terms of color and size.
- 27 **717 6th Ave. N.** KEY Contributing. Constructed c. 1905, this distinctive example exhibits Shingle Style influences, including the bold gable-side roofline, large polygonal front dormer, wood shingles, and the irregular porch shape. Between the first and second stories is a broad course with limited moulding which doubles as a lintel for some windows. The sweeping porch has round columns, a balustrade, and broad welcoming steps. Some windows display fine classical keystones and carved detail. The very narrow clapboard and decorative wood shingle are painted green, and there is white trim. Alterations are acceptable and unintrusive: small bay added and back porch enclosed (1976). Earl Hill bought the property in 1905 and sold it in 1908 for \$3,425 to Silas Miller. (See photo 2.)
- 28 **715 6th Ave. N.** Noncontributing. Dating from 1956, the one story gable-side cottage has dark grey wide (asbestos?) siding and is tucked back away from the street. Set firmly at ground level, it has a simple porch with four slender turned columns. The shape, scale, massing, and detail are not visually intrusive within the district.

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- 29 **711 6th Ave. N.** Contributing. The large two story house was built c. 1902. It has a stone foundation, truncated hipped roof and dormers of various shapes. A distinctive feature is the use of extremely narrow clapboard to demarcate the upper story, with alternating narrow and wide clapboards on the first story. A simple course separating the stories doubles as a lintel. The hipped roof front porch has four slender turned columns and no balustrade. The clapboard is currently painted tan with cream trim, and dusty pink is used for the scalloped wood shingle of the dormers. Alterations are unintrusive and fit the scale of the house: rear deck and replacement wood front steps. Some side rear windows appear to have been changed, and an upper front window apparently has been made double. (See photo 2.)
- 30 **703 6th Ave. N.** KEY Contributing. The William B. Van Valkenburg House was built in 1896, and the tower was added in 1904. Among the most prominent in the district, the two story house displays Stick Style detail, including steeply pitched cross gables and wood strips and shingle (and wood sunburst shapes) in the gable ends. Turned columns with intricate brackets, spindlework, turned balusters and newels further enliven the surface; a chamfered side bay, and the irregular porch add to the collection of shapes. Of particular note is the polygonal tower which was added in 1904; distinctive features include a rooftop finial, tiny attic windows, a band of sawtooth pattern wood shingle, and decorative wood strips outlining the corners and windows. The foundation is stone, and the clapboard is painted dove grey with lighter grey used for the trim. There appear to be no alterations, although it is said a small room was removed from the side rear in the last 30 years. The first owner, William B. Van Valkenburg, was a vocal instructor at Cornell College. He served as the first director of the school's conservatory, beginning in 1890. His house was among the first houses built in the Ash Park Addition. The property was sold for \$2700 to Thomas Nicholson in 1898, who sold it two years later to Albert J. Berryman. (See photo 3.)
- 31 **615 6th Ave. N.** Contributing. The house was constructed c. 1900. A good representative example, the two story dwelling has crossed gables, and the front-facing gable angles slightly and extends onward at one side to provide additional interior space. Like others in the district,

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there is wood shingle (sawtooth pattern) in the gable end and a porch with turned bracketed columns and balusters spanning the front. Other notable features include the stone foundation, a chamfered bay at the side, and clapboard and shingles painted tan with white trim and dark green shutters. Alterations are acceptable and include a two story rear sleeping porch addition and a rear deck. The house was built after 1895 when Frances W. Adams was owner and 1903 when Ella R. Adams acquired the property for \$2,526. (See photo 5.)

32 **603 N.W. 6th St.** Contributing. The Hamline H. Freer House dates from 1901. The two story house is painted white and displays Colonial Revival details, including cornice returns, a dentil course, multiple pane windows, an oval window with keystones around it, and side lights at the 6th Street entrance. The outline of the essentially gabled house is complex, for there are a number of gables--some of them uneven--on the front and side facades of this corner-lot house. Porch columns have solid flared capitals which end in very unusual tiny curls, and a steeply pitched gabled dormer is also distinctive. Clapboard sheathing is narrower above the first story, and there is a stone foundation and a chamfered bay. The principal alteration is not intrusive: a small, one story, clapboarded, flat-roofed garage addition to the side rear. Hamline H. Freer, a professor at Cornell College, bought the property in 1901 for \$4000. Hamline was active in Mount Vernon improvement projects; in 1903, for example, he was a director in a company formed to build the Altoona Hotel on the Lincoln Highway. The professor died in 1920 and Freer family members lived in the house until 1945.

33 **609 N.W. 6th St.** Contributing. Constructed c. 1921, the one and one-half story gable-front house is a typical example of the Craftsman Style. Characteristic features include vertical muntins, a broadly pitched gabled front porch, battered porch columns resting on tall brick bases, simple balustrade, and large gabled dormers. Painted cream with blue trim and having a brick foundation, the house appears to be unaltered. Hamline Freer, who lived in adjacent house #32, owned this property as well. His widow, Mary L. Freer, became sole owner in 1921 following his death; she sold it to Frank Runkle in 1926 for \$2500, suggesting that the house was built in the 1920s. (See photo 9.)

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- 34 **615 N.W. 6th St.** Contributing. With its distinctive three-sided corner tower with a steep polygonal roof, the two story intersecting-gable house exhibits Queen Anne massing but with simple detail, and the 1895 house should be considered a transitional example showing both Queen Anne and Colonial Revival elements. An unusual one story polygonal entry area (with bay) is located on the front corner opposite the tower. There are cornice returns, a Colonial Revival feature. Alterations include metal awnings, new attic windows cut into gable ends (effect is not intrusive), and a two story, clapboarded, rear sleeping porch addition. Since the 1987-88 survey of Mount Vernon, the owner has removed the asbestos siding, revealing clapboard that is narrower on the second story above a simple course. Ezra and Eliza Sargent built the house in 1895, according to the abstract and an item in the newspaper. Charles Heller built at least one house for the Sargents, but it is not clear if this was that house. (Because of this uncertainty, his name is not entered in the Architect/Builder section of this nomination.) The Sargents were known to have owned more than one house in Mount Vernon.
- 35 **625 N.W. 6th St.** Contributing. Like others in the district, the c. 1900 two story house has a front gable which is extended on one side to form an uneven shape. Other familiar features include the T-shape with prominent front-facing gable, chamfered bay, stone foundation, water course, corner boards, and wood shingle in gable ends. Porch columns are slender and widely spaced below the hipped roof of the porch. Additions consist of a screen porch added to the rear, a two story flat-roofed side rear addition--neither of which is recent--and a double-car garage addition. Minor and acceptable alterations include a replacement porch balustrade. The clapboard is painted cream, and there is blue trim and maroon painted wood shingle.
- 36 **608 7th Ave. N.** Contributing. Similar in scale and stylistic detail to its neighbor (37), the c. 1900 one and one-half story house is gable-side with some additional gables. Clapboard sheathing is very narrow, and there is a stone foundation. Notable features include wood shingle in the gable ends, a small side bay, and a large front bay having a large gable above it. Colonial Revival influences are evident in the cornice returns, side lights, bull's-eye

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window with four keystones, and elliptical arched front door surround. The front porch is tucked to one side of this front bay to form a pleasing and complex outline. There appear to be no alterations.

- 37** **616 7th Ave. N.** Contributing. Like adjacent #36, the c. 1900 one and one-half gambrel-front house has Colonial Revival detail: pent roof effect, porch roof balustrade, turned porch balusters, Corinthian porch columns, round window. There are prominent gambrel-roofed dormers, scallop wood shingle, clapboarding, and several small bays. At the rear is a large hipped roof section which appears to have been changed or added, but not recently. The principal facades appear to be unaltered.
- 38** **615 N.W. 7th St.** Contributing. The Henry Bair House dates from c. 1915. The two story clapboard house is a fine and well preserved example of the Four Square house type. Important features include the hipped roof, ample hipped roof dormer (with three squared multiple pane windows), stone foundation, corner boards, symmetric design, and hipped roof porch. The porch has simple, slightly flared, squared columns which rest on small clapboarded bases, and there are turned balusters. Painted white with light grey window surrounds, the house appears unaltered, save a small gabled rear addition built in 1977. Bair reportedly built the house and lived in it until around 1929.
- 39** **617 N.W. 7th St.** Contributing. Like others in the district, the two story house has crossed gables, an unusual gable extension to the front-facing gable, chamfered corners, very narrow clapboard, wood shingle in the gable ends, and a front porch with spindle balusters. The house appears unaltered; paint colors consist of peach clapboard with tan and green trim. Samuel S. and Hannah Terrell built the house in 1914 when the present legal description was established.
- 40** **703 7th Ave. N.** Contributing. The Daniel C. Hartung House was built in 1902. The distinctive two story house has a complex roofline of intersecting gables which include a porch partially integrated within the house. Shapes are bold and prominent. Notable features include clapboard and wood shingling, the stone foundation (including for porch column bases), and heavy pent-roofed gables. Some windows are grouped in three's and a porch with spindle balusters

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wraps around one corner of the house. Alterations are minor: back porch enclosed and narrow replacement siding applied to limited parts of the house. In 1901 Hartung bought the property, which was located at the back of the Reuben Ash farmstead. According to a February 28, 1902 item in the local newspaper, the Hartungs moved into their new house in Ash Park that month. Hartung was a carpenter and house builder.

- 41 **617 7th Ave. N.** Contributing. Dating from 1895, the two story truncated hipped roof house (with large additional gables, one of which is chamfered) displays a unique two story shed-roofed porch. Porch detail consists of delicate, almost lacy, pierced grillwork. Fine and dainty bargeboard detail (with spindles and cut out shapes) is found in the front gable end. The clapboard is painted grey, and there is white trim, wood shingle in gable ends, and a stone foundation. Alterations appear to be limited to the addition of a back porch. It is likely the house is the same as the one referred to in an 1895 newspaper item: "Across the street and a little north of Mr. Sargent's place [35] is the new home of Rev. Chaffee, the popular college agent. It is a nice sized dwelling, with covered gallery two stories high in front and has the advantage of already being finely shaded, located in the heart of the old Ash orchard."
- 42 **605 7th Ave. N.** Contributing. Like others in the district, the c. 1900 two story house has a hipped roof and additional gables, resulting in a complex outline. A prominent flat-roofed porch wraps around one corner and further complicates the shape. Other notable features include the use of clapboard with wood shingle, the stone foundation, moulded lintels, chamfered side bay, and squared porch columns resting on brick bases. Alterations include a two story rear sleeping porch and a smaller side rear addition. It is possible the front porch replaced an earlier version in the 1920s, but it does not detract from the design, scale, and materials of the main body of the house.

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The Ash Park District is significant under Criterion C, for it embodies distinctive characteristics of types and methods of construction in Mount Vernon for the period. The district was developed during the railroad era, an important time in the community, and the houses reflect stylistic influences from then. As befits a residential district from the railroad era, a number of the motifs and decorative features were commercially fabricated and brought in using rail service. In addition, the house designs reflect an awareness and application of patternbook designs, marking a departure from vernacular or traditional building preferences in the community.

The district exhibits clear visual cohesiveness, an important factor in illustrating the characteristics of this turn-of-the-century neighborhood. The district exemplifies railroad-related prosperity in Mount Vernon, for most of the houses are largely unaltered and date from the same period. Commodious dwellings exhibit similarity in size, shape, siting, materials, and stylistic influences. Unlike other areas of town, there are relatively few intrusions.

The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD), the Historic Resources of Mount Vernon, Iowa, and the context, the Railroad Era, 1859-1913, provide contextual information confirming the architectural significance of the Ash Park District. The district meets the registration requirements outlined in the MPD. Located along the Chicago & North Western Railroad tracks, Ash Park illustrates platting efforts stimulated by rail line presence. In addition, it is directly associated with the period of railroad-related prosperity Mount Vernon enjoyed at the turn of the century.

The period of significance begins with 1895 (the earliest date of house construction) and continues to 1919 (the last known date of construction until the mid-1950s). Given the nationwide financial depression of 1893, it is not surprising that Ash Park development was initially slow. While the end date of the context's period of significance is 1913 in the MPD, it is reasonable to extend the period of significance for Ash Park District slightly, to 1919. This extension takes into account the brief and understandable lag between responding to railroad era prosperity and actual construction. Residential examples in the district which were built throughout the 1910s continue the stylistic influences, materials, scale, and motifs of slightly earlier examples.

Regarding Criterion Consideration B., one house (724 5th Ave. N. (6) was moved to Ash Park. However, its significance is primarily

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architectural, for it exhibits materials, scale, location, and detail similar to others in the district. The move occurred more than fifty years ago (in 1935).

Charles P. Whittemore and William E. Platner, "two of Mt. Vernon's most prominent citizens," platted Ash Park on August 17, 1893. Platner operated the local stone quarry, and the many stone foundations of Ash Park houses call attention to his role in developing the neighborhood. While Whittemore and Platner acted as developers for the district, Elma Jane Ash Baird and her husband A.K. Baird, executors of the Reuben Ash Estate, were also plat owners representing the interests of the estate. Reuben Ash, who died in 1891, came to the Mount Vernon area in 1839. Ash Park was platted from his homestead. The primary farmstead of the homestead lies outside the district (facing 8th Ave. N., near building 40 in the district building list and map). The only reference to pre-Ash Park uses within the district is mention of the orchard associated with the Reuben Ash homestead; the Rev. Chaffee built his house (probably 41) "in the heart of the old Ash orchard."¹

The 1893 timing for the plat was perhaps unfortunate, for the nation fell prey to a large scale financial depression that same year. By the spring of 1895, however, Mount Vernon had begun to recover from the economic doldrums, and the newspaper confidently reported that "quite a number of these lots have already been sold and elegant homes will be erected on them soon."²

The Ash Park plat was considered a desirable spot, for "the location is a beautiful one and commands a fine view in all directions." Further, since lots had been sold to "well-to-do and public spirited men who will take pride in making their homes attractive," the newspaper optimistically forecast only good things for the district. Indeed, it was predicted that Ash Park was "destined to be a most popular residential part of the village."³

¹Mount Vernon Hawk-eye, May 3, 1895, quoting; *A Centennial History of Mount Vernon, Iowa* (Centennial Committee, 1948), p.228; abstract for Lots 9 and 10, block 8, Ash Park Addition; "Reuben Ash," *The Biographical Record of Linn County, Iowa* (Chicago, J.S. Clarke Publishing Company, 1901), pp. 282, 285.

²Mount Vernon Hawk-eye, May 3, 1895.

³Ibid.

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Among the improvements to the district by 1895 was a new sidewalk constructed along the south end. The new route shortened the distance to walk between college and depot by nearly one-half, and its construction underlines the role of the railroad in Mount Vernon's development during this period.

By mid-summer "Ash Park [was] gradually fulfilling the predictions of the energetic men who made this addition to the city." By then, homes built by William Van Valkenburg, E.D. Sargent, and the Rev. Chaffee were under construction in the Ash Park district. Chaffee's had the advantage of mature trees, for it was located in the midst of the former Ash farmstead orchard. Van Valkenburg and Chaffee underscore the effect of the Cornell College presence in the community, for the former was a professor and the latter served as college agent.⁴

Following the ebullient beginnings in the late 1890s, Ash Park developed steadily through the early decades of the 20th century. Between 1895 and 1919, a 24-year span, 36 of the 42 houses comprising the district were built, providing remarkable visual cohesiveness. With the Ash Park district as an illustration, "...it is not too much to say that today there is no prettier and more home-like town in all the west than our own beautiful Mount Vernon."⁵

Following the initial spate of construction, there was little additional building until the 1960s. Since then, five modern houses have been scattered throughout the district. The social as well as visual character of Ash Park has remained constant over the decades. It remains, as it began, a desirable middle class residential district in Mount Vernon.

⁴Mount Vernon Hawk-eye, July 5, 1895.

⁵Mount Vernon Hawk-eye, May 3, 1895.

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Mount Vernon Hawk-eye, May 3, 1895, December 13, 1901, February 28, 1902, April 11, 1902.

A Centennial History of Mount Vernon, Iowa. Centennial Committee, 1948.

"Reuben Ash," *The Biographical Record of Linn County, Iowa*. Chicago, J.S. Clarke Publishing Company.

Long, Barbara Beving. *The Historic Resources of Mount Vernon, Iowa*. Multiple Property Documentation Form. 1991.

----- . *Architectural/Historical Sites Survey*. Mount Vernon, Iowa - the Hill City. 1988.

Mount Vernon Historic Resources Data Base.

Abstracts for various properties in the district.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The district is roughly rectangular with a "bite" taken from the northwest corner. The south boundary is N.W. 6th Street and the north boundary is N.W. 8th Street. The east boundary is the east end of the plat--the back lot line of houses fronting on 5th Avenue North. The west boundary is the back lot line of houses fronting on 7th Avenue North--until one house beyond N.W. 7th Street where the boundary line becomes the back lot line of houses along the east side of 7th Avenue North. The boundaries are depicted on the accompanying base map.

Boundary Justification:

The heart of the Ash Park plat was developed at the turn of the century and can be distinguished from surrounding properties on a number of fronts. The timing of initial plat development and its primary historical development relate directly to an important historic context for Mount Vernon, the railroad era. However, portions of the north and west edges of the plat do not share this relationship with properties properly constituting the heart of the district. Visual barriers and obvious changes in character mark these differences. (See map.)

On the north edge of the district (N.W. 8th Street) there is a clear break in house siting, age and style. While most houses in the heart of the district face east or west, the ten houses on the north side of N.W. 8th Street face south. Most (nine) are less than fifty years of age and are variations of gable-side ranch style dwellings. A factor in this late development likely is the presence of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad tracks which run directly along the back lot line of these properties.

On both sides of the north end of 7th Avenue North there is a marked change in character, for there is a cluster of five noncontributing properties. Since this is a peripheral area at the end of the district which no longer retains integrity, it does not contribute to the significance to the district and is therefore not included within district boundaries.

On the west edge of the district, houses along 8th Avenue North turn away from the rest of the plat to face the Cornell College campus. The eight houses are nearly as diverse in stylistic influences as they are in number, with Prairie School, Tudor Revival, Greek Revival, and modern ranch among the styles displayed. Thus, there is a marked visual change in the character of this area. The eight houses--several of which are distinctive and excellent examples of Mount Vernon residential architec-

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ture--are part of the Cornell College Historic District. This is appropriate, given the visual, locational, and historical associations of the houses, many of which were built by professors.

Sixth Street marks a clear visual change between earlier additions to Mount Vernon and the Ash Park plat. Previous plats continued the pattern established by the original town plat. In contrast, Ash Park is oriented following the cardinal directions, and it aptly follows the pattern of the rail line as well. The change is abrupt and obvious, with triangular planting spaces and lots in the older portion abutting the new, railroad-related Ash Park plat.

The east boundary of the historic district is the legal edge of the plat. Residential development continues east of Ash Park, but it is of a different character, having considerable modern intrusions. These additions lack the cohesive visual appearance and appeal of Ash Park.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

ASH PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
Mount Vernon, Linn County, Iowa

photographer: Bob Compagna
date of photographs: January 1993
negative location: Mount Vernon Preservation Commission

1. Representative streetscene, N.W. 6th Street and 5th Ave. N
camera facing northwest
from left to right: 525 N.W. 6th St. (17 in building list and on
map), 511 N.W. 6th St. (16), and 603 5th Ave. N. (15). Note mature
trees.
2. Representative streetscene, west side of 6th Ave. N.
camera facing south
from nearest house to farthest: 717 6th Ave. N. (27), 711 6th Ave.
N. (29). House at 715 6th Ave. N. (28) is set back and therefore
not visible.
3. 703 6th Ave. N. (30), William B. Van Valkenburg House.
camera facing northwest
Example of KEY contributing house; note stone foundation, decorative
stickwork and shinglework, turned columns and banisters, prominent
polygonal tower.
4. 603 5th Ave. N. (15)
camera facing west
One of four similarly massed houses; note "infill" or extension of
gabled section behind front porch and lower "infill" to right of
front-facing gable
5. 615 6th Ave. N. (31)
camera facing northwest
One of four similarly massed houses in district: note extended
front-facing gable
6. 724 5th Ave. N. (6)
camera facing east
detail showing bold shapes which contrast with delicate Adamesque
detail
7. 716 6th Ave. N. (24)
camera facing northeast

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garage siting and scale typical of district; dogs are friendly; KEY contributing; note complex roofline, ample porch, limited Colonial Revival detail

8. 610 5th Ave. N. (2), Harry Kelly House.
camera facing southeast
good example Colonial Revival influence in district
9. 609 N.W. 6th St. (33)
camera facing north
example of Craftsman Style in district

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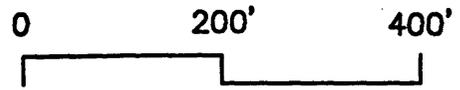
Ash Park Historic District, Linn County, IA

27* = KEY contributing

29 = contributing

43 = noncontributing

arrows with numbers = photographs



CHICAGO AND NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD

