



Caring People ♦ Quality Programs ♦ Exceptional Service

MEMO

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Kelly Diekmann, Planning & Housing Director

DATE: September 22, 2023

SUBJECT: Request for the City of Ames to Pursue a Grant for nomination of Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Additions to the National Register of Historic Places

Background:

City Council referred a request on August 22, 2023, from Devon Lewis who represents an ad hoc committee that was formed from residents of the Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Addition neighborhood (see Letter included as “Attachment A”). The neighborhood covers the area between 6th and 13th Streets, and between Brookridge Park and the Railroad tracks - specifically Brookridge Avenue, Ridgewood Avenue, Lee Street, Park Way, Orchard Drive, and Blackwood Circle (see Map included as “Attachment B”).

This area was the recent subject of the Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Intensive Level Survey (survey) that was completed in 2022, under a CLG Grant for \$14,000 (see www.CityOfAmes.org/HistoricSurvey). **The survey indicated that the Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Addition neighborhood has a high level of historic integrity with 176 contributing buildings, including both houses and detached garages (see Contributing Properties included as “Attachment C”) representing 81% of the 150 properties.**

Neighborhood outreach during completion of the survey included a discussion of “What is a Historic District?” (see Historic District Fact Sheet included as “Attachment D”). An informal inquiry of the 43 people who attended indicated support of a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination. However, the inquiry was representative of only 20% of the properties. **Pursuit of a NRHP listing is the logical next step, given that the findings of the Intensive Level Survey determined that there is a strong likelihood of eligibility. However, staff noted that if a NRHP nomination were to be pursued, it would be necessary to determine if the majority of the neighborhood households support it.**

As a result of the survey work, the residents of the Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Additions neighborhood decided to form an ad hoc committee to ascertain the support from their neighbors regarding an NRHP nomination. **As reported in Devon Lewis’ letter, the committee contacted each of the 150 properties and received an overwhelming response in favor of pursuing a NRHP nomination. The neighborhood representatives are seeking to prepare an application for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); they are not proposing to create a local historic district with mandatory design requirements. This is**

contrasted with the City's existing Old Town Historic District for example, which does contain design requirements.

Under Federal Law, property owners retain their rights to alter, demolish, preserve, or sell their properties within the framework of local laws or ordinances. The listing of a property in the NRHP imposes no restrictions, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance (see Historic District Fact Sheet included as "Attachment D" and NHRP Listings in Story County included as "Attachment E"). **Within Ames there are currently three NRHP districts: Ames Main Street Historic District; Bandshell Park Historic District; and Old Town Historic District.**

Although any group or property owner can cause an application to be prepared, the neighborhood representatives are requesting the City take on this task of the nomination. The City has been involved at least partially in the preparation of the three existing districts, to varying degrees. The City was responsible for Old Town and Bandshell, and began the work for the Downtown District and provided funding for it.

In order to pursue a NRHP nomination, funding would be needed for the hiring of a consultant to complete required research and prepare the nomination forms. The completed survey would be the basis of most of the work. **Staff believes that the cost of the application would be approximately \$20,000, inclusive of consulting costs and in-kind staff time contributions. The contract cost of the consultant is estimated to be 80% of this total (\$16,000).**

Ames is a Certified Local Government and qualifies as an applicant for two state grant programs that can assist in preparation of a NRHP Application:

- Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant
- Historical Resource Development Program (HRDP) Grant

With a grant from the state, the costs to the City could be reduced. Options to pursue a grant are described below. In addition to considering costs, the City Council would have to consider the prioritization of the project with other City Council initiatives for the Planning and Housing Work Plan.

Options:

Option 1- Direct staff to budget support for the pursuit of a grant for the NRHP nomination for the Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Additions.

The ad hoc committee is requesting Council support and assistance in moving an NRHP nomination forward for the Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Additions, by authorizing the pursuit of a grant. City staff would prepare and submit the grant application to the state. **The next available grant application period is in spring 2024. Alternatively, there is a grant round in fall 2024. If the City is awarded the grant, a consultant would be hired to administer it. Staff estimates a need for a cash obligation from the City of \$6,000 to supplement the cost of a consultant.** Funding could be earmarked under the current fiscal year or designated under the next fiscal year as a match for a grant. **If the City applies in the spring of 2024, the work could begin July 1, 2024.**

In the past, the City Council has funded historic preservation surveys and nominations. The City funded a contract for \$38,150 with a consultant for the preparation of a nomination to the NRHP for Old Town (April 2003). Local Option Sales Tax funds were used to fund the City's contribution of \$9,050. The City funded an Intensive Survey and NRHP nomination for Downtown (Dec 2011). The entire contract was \$27,287, of which \$10,656 was funded by unused Downtown Façade Grant funds (Hotel/Motel).

Option 2- Support for the Nomination with No Action Regarding Funding at this Time.

The City could indicate support for the nomination without acting on the funding at this time, as the City is just beginning the budgeting process for the next fiscal year. The requested \$6,000 in funding could be considered along with other requests for FY 2023/24 funds, since the next round of grant applications is not due until spring or fall 2024.

Option 3- Do Not Direct Staff to Prepare a Grant Application for a Listing on the NRHP for the Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Additions as a Priority Council Project for 2024.

The requested action of the neighborhood representatives to pursue a grant application and proceed with preparing an application with consultant assistance is a major project for the Planning and Housing Department. The project would have two distinct phases of preparing a grant application and then proceeding with the nomination work itself upon grant approval.

Preparing the grant application would need to occur within the current fiscal year (FY 2023/24), while the actual nomination work would likely occur in the next fiscal year (FY 2024/25). Staff believes the state would allow approximately 18 months to complete the project and seek reimbursement for the grant funded work.

City Council has not budgeted for or prioritized this project with the Planning and Housing Department. Council could defer action on this request until the next work plan prioritization or until Council goal setting in January 2024.

Staff Comments

If Council is interested in Option 1 or 2, the item should be referred to a future City Council meeting. The primary distinction between Option 1 and Option 2 is whether the City would affirmatively commit to providing some level of funding for the nomination as part of a grant match. Option 3 would require no action by Council at this time.

ATTACHMENT A
Letter from Devon Lewis and Ad Hoc Committee

August 15, 2023

Dear Mayor Haila and Ames City Council Members,

We are an ad hoc committee representing the Chautauqua Park and Ridgewood Addition neighborhoods. As a follow-up to the Intensive Level Survey that was done last year and the neighborhood meeting that was held by the City on October 6, 2022, we formed as an ad hoc committee specifically to ascertain interest from our neighborhood about pursuing a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination. It is also our understanding from City staff that a determination was made by the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), in February of this year based upon the Intensive Level Survey work that was done, that this area is likely eligible for listing in the NRHP.

The neighborhood covers the area between 6th and 13th Streets, and between Brookridge Park and the Railroad tracks - specifically Brookridge Avenue, Ridgewood Avenue, Lee Street, Park Way, Orchard Drive, and Blackwood Circle. The area consists of 150 properties.

In July, we wrote to you about our plans to contact residents to determine their level of interest in a historic district recognition in the NRHP. Between July 10 and August 15, 2023, we received 86 responses from the 150 properties, either in-person or in writing. The responses are overwhelmingly in favor of pursuing a nomination:

- 74 – Favor proceeding with a nomination to the NRHP
- 10 – No opinion - not opposed, nor in favor
- 02 – Oppose proceeding with a nomination to the NRHP

A nomination to the NRHP would need to be completed by an experienced architectural historian consultant. Cash funding from a grant supplemented with a cash match from the city plus staff administration would then be needed to fund this work. Volunteer hours would also contribute to the in-kind match.

Based upon an understanding of the SHPO Grant parameters and expenses of a consultant, we anticipate the following Budget:

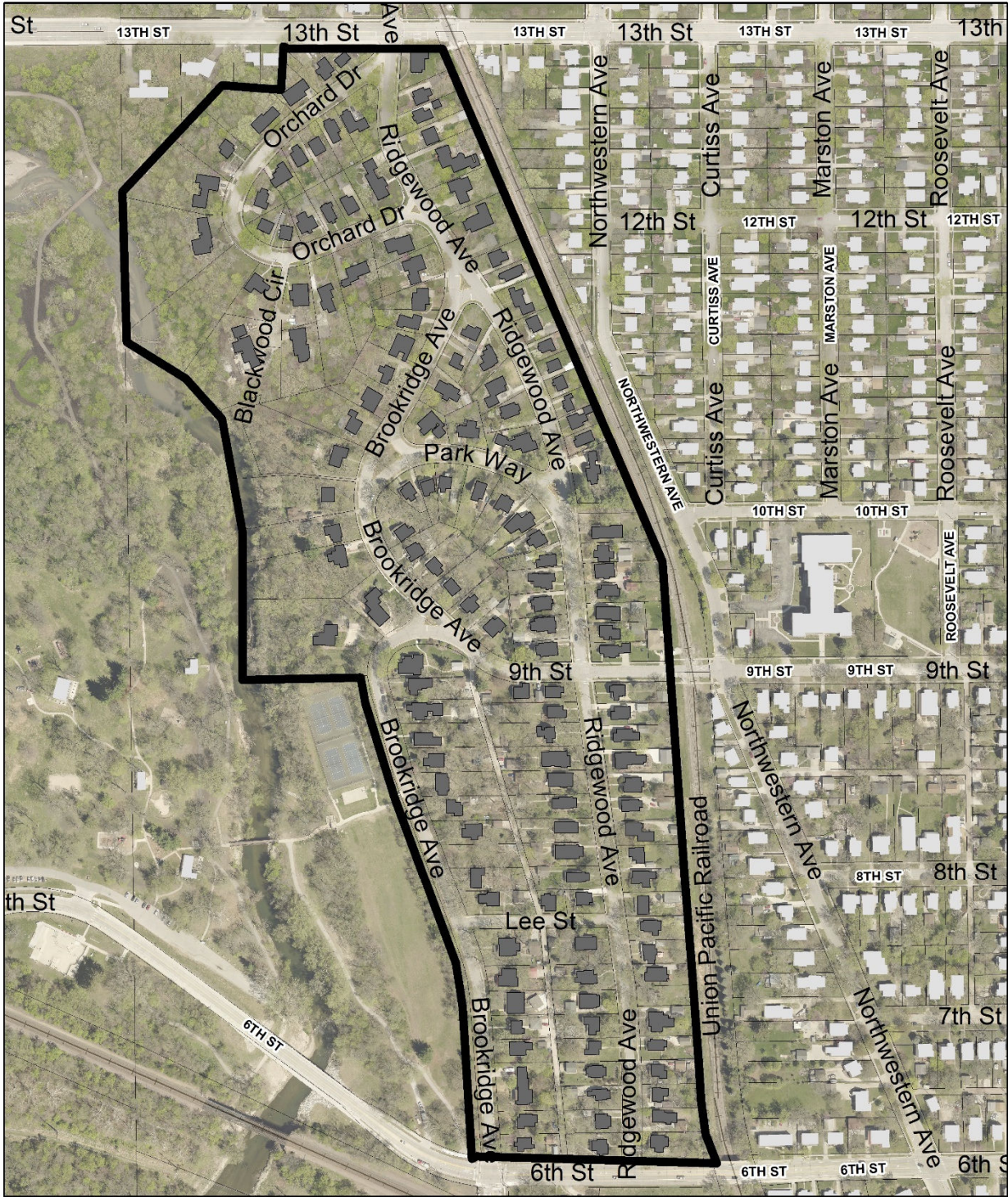
Consultant Fee	\$16,000
Grant (cash) -	\$10,000
City (cash) -	\$ 6,000
City (grant administration services) -	\$ 3,800
In-Kind Services -	\$ 200
[donated labor is calculated at State's min. wage rate of \$7.25 per hour x 25 hours]	
Total Project Cost -	\$20,000

Because of the level of neighborhood interest and the previous work undertaken in the Intensive Level Survey, we respectfully request your support and assistance in pursuing a nomination to the NRHP by being placed on the City Council September 12th Agenda to proceed with a grant application.

Respectfully,

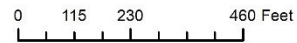
Devon Lewis
Dennis and Carol Barrick
Helen Jensen
Robert Ewald
Stacey Brown

ATTACHMENT B
Map of the Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Study Area



Chautauqua Park & Ridgewood Additions

Prepared by Ames Planning & Housing Dept, Sept 2022



ATTACHMENT C
Contributing Properties Map

Contributing
Properties

Key

 Contributing



Chautauqua Park & Ridgewood Subdivision (So.) 

Intensive Level Survey 

ATTACHMENT D
Historic District Fact Sheet-Handout
Prepared by City of Ames, Planning & Housing Department
October 2022

Benefits of Historic Preservation

Historic district designation can help stabilize a neighborhood, stimulate increased owner-occupancy by making it a more distinct and desirable place to live, and can encourage investment in the rehabilitation of buildings. These beneficial effects vary, depending on the area and the economy at the time, but overall, historic district designation has produced positive results in Ames.

What Makes Something Historic?

To be considered eligible as a “historic” building, a building is typically at least 50 years of age – but not everything 50 years old is considered significant. There are other criteria to consider. The decision to protect historic places rests in the meaning they bring to our lives and the ways they define and mark our history. For example,

- A building may be historic because it was designed by a well-known architect or was the place where a significant event occurred (such as a battlefield).
- A building may also be historic because it signifies patterns of settlement and trade, incorporated local materials and methods in construction, or because it is typical of the time.

What is a historic district?

- An area or neighborhood that has a concentration of historic resources, which retain their architectural integrity and represent an important aspect of the area’s history (periods of growth, historic architectural styles, etc.)
- There are two types of historic districts: Designation on the National Register of Historic Places and Local District designation (by the City Council). A district may be listed at either the National or Local level or both.
- There are many misconceptions about what it means to live in a historic district, and the benefits historic districts can provide are numerous.

Misconceptions About Historic Districts

- The designation of property in either type of district does not raise the property tax on any particular property. (Property tax increases are based on property values and determined independently.)
- Neither type of historic district can restrict the use or sale of a property; that is predetermined through local zoning ordinances.

What are the benefits of historic district designation?

National Register-

- A National Register of Historic Places listing identifies an area of the community that includes individual buildings, structures, sites, and objects that are historically, architecturally, or archaeologically significant. Its boundaries are tightly drawn to encompass only concentrated areas of significant properties and does not affect noncontributing elements.

A listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is honorary. Ames has three NRHP historic district listings: Ames Main Street Historic District; Bandshell Park Historic District; and Old Town Historic District. Additionally, there are seventeen individual building/property listings.

- Financial benefits- There are many local, state, and federal programs to assist qualifying rehabilitation projects. The website includes a listing of various programs. Foremost is the state tax credit for owners who rehabilitate residential buildings. Homes that obtain the state tax credit may also get local property taxes reduced for up to 4 years after a rehabilitation project is completed. (Please verify availability, as such programs are subject to change.)
- Listing on the National Register places no federal restrictions or requirements on a private property owner unless federal funds are used. Property owners retain all of their rights to alter, demolish, preserve, or sell their properties, within the framework of local laws or ordinances. However, if significant modifications are made that are incompatible with the historic character of the property or if it is demolished, the property may be delisted from the National Register.
- If a majority of property owners object, the district will not be listed but may be forwarded to the National Park Service for a Determination of Eligibility (DOE).

Local Historic District-

- A local historic district is an area established by the Ames City Council, which contains buildings and properties considered valuable for historical or architectural reasons. Ames currently has only one local historic district, the Old Town Historic District.
- Financial benefits- There are many local, state, and federal programs to assist qualifying rehabilitation projects. The website includes a listing of various programs. Foremost is the state tax credit for owners who rehabilitate residential buildings. Homes that obtain the state tax credit may also get local property taxes reduced for up to 4 years after a rehabilitation project is completed. (Please verify availability, as such programs are subject to change.)
- Establishment of a local historic district helps ensure that growth, development, and change take place in ways that respect the important architectural, historical, cultural, and environmental characteristics of the district.
- A local historic district receives legal protection from certain types of development considered to be inappropriate. The Historic Preservation Commission approves exterior changes to structures and issues Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) before a building or demolition permit is issued. The degree of protection depends on the details included in the local ordinance that is adopted to govern the district. (Not every district has to be the same.)
- The City of Ames does not charge to review Certificate of Appropriateness. For certain minor changes to buildings, homeowners can consult with the Department of Planning & Housing and receive approval. Major changes, new construction, and demolition, however, require homeowners to get approval from the Ames Historic Preservation Commission.
- Sites designated in a local historic district may be given more leniency in complying with certain building code requirements, such as the height of porch railings.
- A local nomination may only be proposed by an owner or owners of property within the area; the City Council will not established a local historic district, if the majority of property owners object.

For information on the Chautauqua Park-Ridgewood Intensive Survey, go to:

www.CityofAmes.org/HistoricSurvey or

<https://cityofames.org/government/departments-divisions-i-z/planning/historic-preservation>

or contact: Eloise.Sahlstrom@cityofames.org (515) 239-5400

For more information from the State of Iowa on National Register of Historic Places, go to:

www.iowaculture.gov/history/preservation/national-register-historic-places , or contact:

Allison.Archambo@iowa.gov State Historic Preservation Office, (515) 281-6826

ATTACHMENT E

NRHP Listing of Properties in Story County

25895	85001374	Agriculture Hall	IOWA	Story	Ames	Iowa State University
25896	78001260	Alumni Hall	IOWA	Story	Ames	Iowa State University campus
25897	02001229	Ames High School	IOWA	Story	Ames	515 Clark Ave.
25898	100002399	Ames Main Street Historic District	IOWA	Story	Ames	Roughly 100-400 blks. of Main & 5th Sts. with cross streets
25899	99001238	Bands Hall Park Historic District	IOWA	Story	Ames	Bounded by Duff Ave., E. 5th St., E. 6th St., and Carroll Ave
25900	98000668	Briggs Terrace	IOWA	Story	Nevada	1204 H Ave.
25901	01000860	Budd, Prof. J.L., Sarah M., and Etta Budd, House	IOWA	Story	Ames	804 Kellogg Ave.
25902	98000486	Calamus Creek Bridge	IOWA	Story	Maxwell	325th St. over Calamus Cr.
25903	87000020	Christian Petersen Courtyard Sculptures, and Dairy Indust	IOWA	Story	Ames	Union Dr. and Wallace Rd., Iowa State University campus
25904	12000003	Colonial Club House	IOWA	Story	Ames	217 Ash Ave.
25905	100005150	Cranford Apartment Building	IOWA	Story	Ames	103 Stanton Ave.
25906	10000519	Delta Upsilon Chapter House	IOWA	Story	Ames	117 Ash Ave
25907	98000485	East Indian Creek Bridge	IOWA	Story	Nevada	260th St. over East Indian Cr.
25908	78001262	Edwards-Swayze House	IOWA	Story	Nevada	1119 9th St.
25909	83000402	Engineering Hall	IOWA	Story	Ames	Union Dr., Iowa State University campus
25910	80001460	Grand Auditorium and Hotel Block	IOWA	Story	Story City	Broad St.
25911	05000317	Henryson, Henry T. and Emilie (Wiese), House	IOWA	Story	Story City	619 Grad Ave.
25912	86001244	Herschel-Spillman Two-Row Portable Managerie Carouse	IOWA	Story	Story City	North Park, Story St., and Grove Ave.
25913	13001140	Iowa Beta Chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon	IOWA	Story	Ames	223 Gray Ave.
25914	98000483	Keigley Branch Bridge	IOWA	Story	Gilbert	550th St. over Keigley Branch
25915	66000339	Knapp-Wilson House	IOWA	Story	Ames	Iowa State University campus
25916	07001004	Lincoln Township Mausoleum	IOWA	Story	Zearing	City Rd. E18, N end of Pearl St.
25917	91001860	McDonald, Gilmore E. and Edith Craig, House	IOWA	Story	Ames	517 Ash St.
25918	82002644	Marston Water Tower	IOWA	Story	Ames	Iowa State University campus
25919	16000608	Masonic Temple	IOWA	Story	Ames	413-417, 427, 425 Douglas Ave.
25920	96000700	Morrill Hall	IOWA	Story	Ames	Morrill Rd., facing E toward central campus, Iowa St. Univ
25921	03001452	Mulcahy Barn	IOWA	Story	Colo	25523-710th Ave.
25922	97000351	Municipal Building	IOWA	Story	Ames	420 Kellogg Ave.
25923	03000356	Nevada Downtown Historic District	IOWA	Story	Nevada	Approx. 6th St. from I Ave. to M Ave.
25924	86001439	Octagon Round Barn, Indian Creek Township	IOWA	Story	Iowa Center	Off CR 514
25925	03001349	Old Town Historic District	IOWA	Story	Ames	Bet. Duff and Clark Ave., and 7th and 9th Sts.
25926	10000255	Pleasant Grove Community Church and Cemetery	IOWA	Story	Ames	56971 170th St
25927	10000055	Roosevelt School	IOWA	Story	Ames	921 5th St.
25928	84001599	Sheldahl First Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church	IOWA	Story	Sheldahl	3rd and Willow Sts.
25929	08000684	Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi Fraternity House	IOWA	Story	Ames	405 Hayward Ave.
25930	98000484	Skunk River Bridge	IOWA	Story	Ames	255th St. over Skunk R.
25931	95000622	Wood, William Kennison, House	IOWA	Story	Iowa Center	Co. Rd. c off 527