

ITEM #: 7
DATE: 06-16-10

COMMISSION ACTION FORM

DATE PREPARED: June 11, 2010

REQUEST: Rezone land located at 1013 Adams Street (including the Adams Memorial Greenway land at 1025 Adams Street) to establish the "O-H" (Historic Preservation Overlay) District and designate the property as a Local Historic Landmark

PROPERTY OWNER: City of Ames
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50010

APPLICANT: Ames Historical Society

LOCATION: 1013 and 1025 Adams Street (*A subdivision plat is being processed that divides the property into two lots. Presently there is only one address (1013 Adams Street). Once the Final Plat is approved for the subdivision, Lot 1 will include the existing house and retain the address of 1013 Adams Street. Lot 2 (Adams Memorial Greenway) will be addressed as 1025 Adams Street.*)

ACREAGE: 4.97 acres (216,450.95 square feet)

- 1013 Adams Street: 1.88 acres (proposed Lot 1)
- 1025 Adams Street: 3.09 acres (proposed Lot 2)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Ames Historical Society has submitted an application requesting that the City of Ames designate the existing house, constructed in 1958, and property at 1013 Adams Street as a Local Historic Landmark (*See Attachment B*). The City of Ames has obtained ownership of the entire property as a gift through the Mary Adams Estate. The house is located in the southeast corner of the site (*See Attachment F*) on 1.88 acres of land that is proposed as Lot 1 of Mary Adams Subdivision. It is the intent of the City to sell the house on Lot 1 for use as a single-family home. The remaining 3.09 acres of the site (proposed Lot 2) is planned for use as a City park to be named "Adams Memorial Greenway." The Greenway will be addressed as 1025 Adams Street.

The Ames Historical Society request proposes designation of the entire site, including the residence and the greenway, as a Local Historic Landmark. This is accomplished with the O-H (Historic Preservation Overlay) zone. This is an overlay zone, but it retains the underlying zoning designation of RL (Residential Low) for the portion of the site with the house, and will have an underlying designation of S-GA (Government/Airport) for the

balance of the property. (See separate application to rezone to S-GA) It is the City, as the new property owner, that is proposing the division of land into two lots for the purpose of selling the residence, and retaining the open space as a public park.

The applicant emphasizes the importance of this greenway (landscape setting) to the Adams house, in the proposed Design Criteria (See Attachment H): *“The Adams’ House relationship to its grassy, open site is an essential aspect of its Landmark status. Alterations or changes in use that alter the visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds shall be discouraged.”*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Establishment of the Local Landmark designation is accomplished through applying the “O-H” (Historic Preservation Overlay) District designation to the property. The “RL” (Residential Low-Density) base zone of proposed Lot 1 will remain unchanged (See Attachments C and D).

The City has initiated rezoning of proposed Lot 2 (Adams Memorial Greenway) from “RL” to “S-GA” (Government/Airport) to reflect that the property is now owned by the City of Ames. This rezoning is being processed concurrently with the rezoning described in this report (See Attachment D).

A Final Plat for “Mary Adams Subdivision” has been prepared and is being processed concurrently with the rezoning proposals. The plat will divide the property into the two lots described above. The current legal description of the property is described as: follows:

Parcel ‘T’ in part of Lot 3 and all of Lot 4 in the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 27, Township 84 North, Range 24 West of the 5th P.M.

The property is served by City water, sanitary sewer, and electric. A public sidewalk along the entire Adams Street frontage was recently constructed and street trees are planned in the street right-of-way between the sidewalk and the street curb.

Future Land Use Map Designation, Zoning, and Land Use of Surrounding Properties.

Area	Future Land Use Map Designation (See Attachment E)	Zoning	Land Uses
North	Environmentally Sensitive Area	S-GA (Government/Airport)	Ada Hayden Heritage Park
	Low Density Residential	RL (Residential Low Density)	Single Family Dwelling
South	Low Density Residential	F-PRD (Planned Residence District)	Condominiums
		RL (Residential Low Density)	Single Family Dwellings
East	Low Density Residential	RL (Residential Low Density)	Single Family Dwellings
West	Village/Suburban Residential	FS-RL (Suburban Res. Low Density)	Single Family Dwellings

Criteria for Designation as a Local Historic Landmark. Section 31.7(2) of the *Municipal Code* states: “A building, structure or site designated as a historic “landmark” shall meet the following criteria:

- (a) Properties are significant in national, state or local history, architecture, landscape architecture, archeology, and culture; and
- (b) Properties possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association; and
- (c) Properties are associated with events that have been a significant contribution to the broad patterns or our history; or
- (d) Properties are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- (e) Properties embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (f) Properties have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

A narrative included with the application (*See Attachment G*) describes how the property is **significant in local history, and that the property possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.** Dr. Adams had a career in osteopathic medicine and was an accomplished artist. His career in osteopathic medicine is directly associated with the house since the house was originally designed as the office for his medical practice. The information presented in the narrative would support designation of the property as a local historic landmark based upon **properties associated with the lives of persons significant in our past [Section 31.7(2)(d)].**

The narrative also includes a section that addresses the architecture of the Adams house (known as “Prairie Ark”), written by Thomas Leslie, AIA. The information presented supports the criteria for designation that includes **properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, and represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.**

Design Criteria. “Design Criteria”, as prepared by the applicant (*See Attachment H*), are proposed that will be applied specifically to these particular properties and used as guidance in evaluating future exterior alterations and additions to the existing house, detached garage, and any new structures constructed on either property. The “Design Criteria must be approved by the City Council at the time of establishment of the Historic Preservation (O-H) zoning overlay. These “Design Criteria” will be adopted by ordinance for inclusion in Chapter 31 (Historic Preservation Districts) for application to the properties at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street.

Design Criteria proposed by the applicant are described as follows:

1. The Adams House is a mixture of late Prairie School and Postwar Modern styles of architecture. Details of design and dimensions of distinct architectural elements of the building, as shown on the building plans prepared by the builder, Bertrand

Adams, shall be followed and conformed to for all alterations or new construction of additions to the building.

2. Substitute materials may be allowed if they are consistent with the historic materials in size, design and texture. Proposals for substitute materials must be expressed with specificity in the application for Certificate of Appropriateness.

Staff Comments: Regulations and restrictions for the use of substitute materials are covered by Section 31.10(6). This section of the Design Criteria should be deleted.

3. The Adams' House relationship to its grassy, open site is an essential aspect of its Landmark status. Alterations or changes in use that alter the visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds shall be discouraged.
4. All alterations and newly constructed additions shall conform to the following characteristics of the building:
 - Building Height: One-and-a-half stories, not including the basement.
 - Roof Type & Pitch: Nominally flat with a slight slope to the clerestory that opens up toward the south.
 - Dormers: None, however the central clerestory is an integral element in the building's massing and primary elevation.
 - Entry: Via a porch on the south side, with alternate entry toward driveway on east.
 - Exterior Materials: Brick and concrete masonry walls. Built-up roofing with metal edge/parapet. Concrete paving to front porch, walkway and driveway. Steel pipe columns support roof over porch. Alterations and/or repairs should match color and pattern of existing brick.
 - Windows: Narrow sash steel windows with predominantly horizontal muntin pattern and metallic finish. Corner windows should be restored, as possible, to their original, more open configuration.
 - Solid/Void Ratio: Maintain position and size of all large-scale openings (doors, windows, etc.) Additional openings as required for accessibility or egress improvements should coordinate with the existing rhythm and pattern of voids.
 - Plan/Footprints: Generally open plan with service areas (kitchen and bath) along the north edge. Predominantly east-west orientation with windows along the south side.

- Landscape: Generally open with small shrubs near house. Provision for daylighting of central rooms is key to the house's aesthetic concept and should be preserved.

Review and Recommendations by the Historic Preservation Commission and the State Historical Society. The Historic Preservation Commission conducted a public hearing on March 13, 2006, to receive oral and written testimony concerning the significance of the nominated historic landmark. It is the responsibility of the Historic Preservation Commission to determine whether the structure proposed for designation as a Local Historic Landmark meets the criteria for designation.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the request for designation of the property as a Local Historic Landmark, with the stipulation that the "Design Criteria" for the historic landmark be changed to delete reference to "substitute" material in #2.

On March 28, 2006, the City Council forwarded the proposal for the Local Landmark Designation to the State Historical Society of Iowa for review and recommendation.

On July 17, 2006, the State Historical Society of Iowa completed their review of the request for designation as a local historic landmark. The State Historical Society concurred that this property is eligible as a local historic landmark because of it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Conclusions of the State review for historic significance by Barbara Mitchell, Architectural Historian for the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office also noted significance with the landscape of the site in proposed Lot 2 (Adams Memorial Greenway). Ms. Mitchell stated, *"We also agree with Tom Leslie's assessment that the entire landscape and setting contributes to the significance of this property, as the entire landscape was considered in the house's design and construction."*

Restrictions of Local Landmark Designation. Designation of the properties at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street as a Local Historic Landmark will require that the property owner(s) comply with all regulations of Chapter 31 (Historic Preservation Districts) of the *Municipal Code*. The property owner(s) will be required to comply with the adopted Design Guidelines and Design Criteria for any alterations or additions to the exterior of the existing house and detached garage. The Design Guidelines and Design Criteria will also apply to any structures constructed in the future on the Adams Memorial Greenway land at 1025 Adams Street. A Certificate of Appropriateness granted by the Historic Preservation Commission will be required, prior to proceeding with any building alterations or new construction. Demolition of the building at 1013 Adams Street will be prohibited, unless the structure cannot be used for the original intended purpose and/or no alternative reasonable use can be identified and the property owner can show evidence that an "economic hardship" will be created if the structure cannot be removed.

FINDINGS OF FACT & CONCLUSIONS:

The staff makes the following findings of facts and conclusions:

FINDINGS

1. The properties at 1013 and 1025 have been deemed to be eligible as a local historic landmark by the State Historical Society.
2. The stated purpose of the Historic Preservation Overlay district is, in part, to recognize the establishment of the City's local Historic Districts, and to have the full and informed participation of the City's Historic Preservation Commission in the hearing of zoning applications potentially affecting the City's historic resources.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The proposed establishment of the "O-H" (Historical Preservation Overlay) zone on this property is consistent with the historical significance of the property as identified by the State Historical Society, and would facilitate appropriate review by the Historic Preservation Commission of any changes to the property.
2. The proposed designation of the properties at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street as a Local Historic Landmark is consistent with the purpose of Chapter 31 of the Municipal Code, since such designation will contribute to the preservation and protection of an historic structure which serves as a visible reminder of the history and cultural heritage of the city.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council approve the proposed rezoning of land located at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street to establish the "O-H" (Historic Preservation Overlay) District and designate the property as a Local Historic Landmark, based upon staff's findings and conclusions, with the following conditions:
 - A. That the proposed rezoning of properties at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street be approved only in conjunction with the approval of the Final Plat of Mary Adams Subdivision.
 - B. The rezoning shall not be effective until the recording of the Final Plat of Mary Adams Subdivision.
 - C. That #2 of the proposed Design Criteria, which references substitute materials, be deleted.
2. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council deny the proposed rezoning of land located at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street to establish the "O-H" (Historic Preservation Overlay) District and designate the property as a Local Historic Landmark if it finds that the proposed rezone is not consistent with adopted codes and policies.

3. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council approve the proposed rezoning of land located at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street to establish the "O-H" (Historic Preservation Overlay) District and designate the property as a Local Historic Landmark, with modifications deemed appropriate to achieve consistency with adopted codes and policies.
4. Action on this request can be postponed and referred back to City staff and/or the applicant for additional information.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is staff's recommendation that the Planning and Zoning Commission act in accordance with Alternative 1, which is a recommendation that the City Council approve the proposed rezoning of land located at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street to establish the "O-H" (Historic Preservation Overlay) District and designate the property as a Local Historic Landmark, based upon staff's findings and conclusions, with the following conditions:

- A. That the proposed rezoning of properties at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street be approved only in conjunction with the approval of the Final Plat of Mary Adams Subdivision.
- B. The rezoning shall not be effective until the recording of the Final Plat of Mary Adams Subdivision.
- C. That #2 of the proposed Design Criteria, which references substitute materials, be deleted.

ATTACHMENT A

Applicable Laws & Policies

The laws and policies applicable to this case file include, but are not limited to, the following: (verbatim language is shown in *italics*, other references are paraphrased):

Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) Map/Goals and Policies. The adopted LUPP includes policy direction for the preservation of historic, cultural, and educational resources.

Goal No.10 states: *"It is the goal of Ames to maintain and enhance its cultural heritage"*.

Objectives for Goal No. 10 are to maintain and enhance Ames' cultural heritage. Objectives that apply to the Local Historic Landmark proposal include the following:

- *Objective 10A. Ames seeks to provide a record of its earlier development through conservation, preservation, and restoration of historically/architecturally significant structures and areas where economically feasible.*
- *Objective 10B. Ames seeks to integrate historically/architecturally significant structures and areas with new development in a compatible and unifying manner.*

Vision Statements in the LUPP for Neighborhoods includes the following statement:

- *In attracting and maintaining this network of neighborhoods the following priorities are identified: "...Conservation and enhancement of the integrity and character of existing neighborhoods ...".*

The Land Use Policy Plan Future Land Use Map designates the subject property as "Low-Density Residential." This proposed rezoning is consistent with this land use designation. (See Attachment E)

Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. The adopted Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan includes the following Goals, Objectives and Action Steps that apply to the proposed designation the subject property as a local historic landmark.

Goal #3 states: *"Enhance municipal policies to protect historic resources and implement policies through identification, effective legislation, and efficient regulatory measures.*

- *Objective D. Continue to designate local historic districts, local landmarks, and National Register of Historic Places properties.*

Action Step: Identify and designate properties eligible for listing as local landmarks and local historic districts.

Ames Municipal Code.

Chapter 29 of the *Municipal Code* addresses the adopted zoning regulations for the City of Ames.

Section 29.1102. "O-H" HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY.

(1) Purpose. The Historic Preservation Overlay (O-H) Zone is intended to recognize the establishment of the City's local Historic Districts (see Section 3.1 et seq. of the Municipal Code) and to promote the public interest in having the full and informed participation of the City's Historic Preservation Commission in the hearing of zoning applications potentially affecting the City's historic resources. To fully meet this objective, the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone may include properties that are proximate to, but not within, one of the Historic Districts established by the Municipal Code. The procedures established by this Section are intended to ensure that the City's Historic Preservation Commission is specifically notified of all applications before the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Zoning Board of Adjustment respecting property within or proximate to the City's local Historic Districts.

(2) Notice. With regard to zoning applications and proposed zoning ordinance amendments that affect proposed or designated landmarks and historic districts, the Historic Preservation Commission shall consider such applications and/or amendments prior to consideration by the Zoning Board of Adjustment, or by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

(3) Certificate of Appropriateness. As provided by Section 31.10 of the Municipal Code, and notwithstanding any uses otherwise permitted under an applicable Base Zone classification, no building or structure within an Historic District established pursuant to Chapter 31 of the Municipal Code may be erected, altered, demolished or removed, and no area within such Chapter 31 Historic District may be used for industrial, commercial, business, home, industry or occupational parking until a certificate of appropriateness has been issued for such activity by the Historic Preservation Commission. This requirement applies only to properties within the City's Historic Districts.

Section 29.701. "RL" RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY.

(1) Purpose. This zone is intended to accommodate primarily single-family dwellings, while accommodating certain existing two-family dwellings and other uses customarily found in low-density residential areas.

Table 29.701(2). Residential Low Density (RL) Zone Uses. This table defines the uses allowed in the "RL" zone.

Table 29.701(3). Residential Low Density (RL) Zone Development Standards. This table defines the development standards in the "RL" Zone.

Section 29.1002. "S-GA" GOVERNMENT/AIRPORT DISTRICT.

(1) Purpose. This Special Purpose District is to be located on the City Zoning Map by the City Council and is reserved exclusively for structures and uses related to or owned by federal, state, county, school districts, or municipal government authorities. Such structures and uses include property of Story County, publicly owned facilities of the City of Ames for administration and services, and general aviation. Although such governmental structures and uses enjoy a legal exemption from local zoning requirements, with the exception of height limitations in the vicinity of any airport, it is expected that such authorities will cooperate with the Department of Planning and Housing to encourage the development standards which will be applicable to and compatible with the general character of the area in which this District is situated.

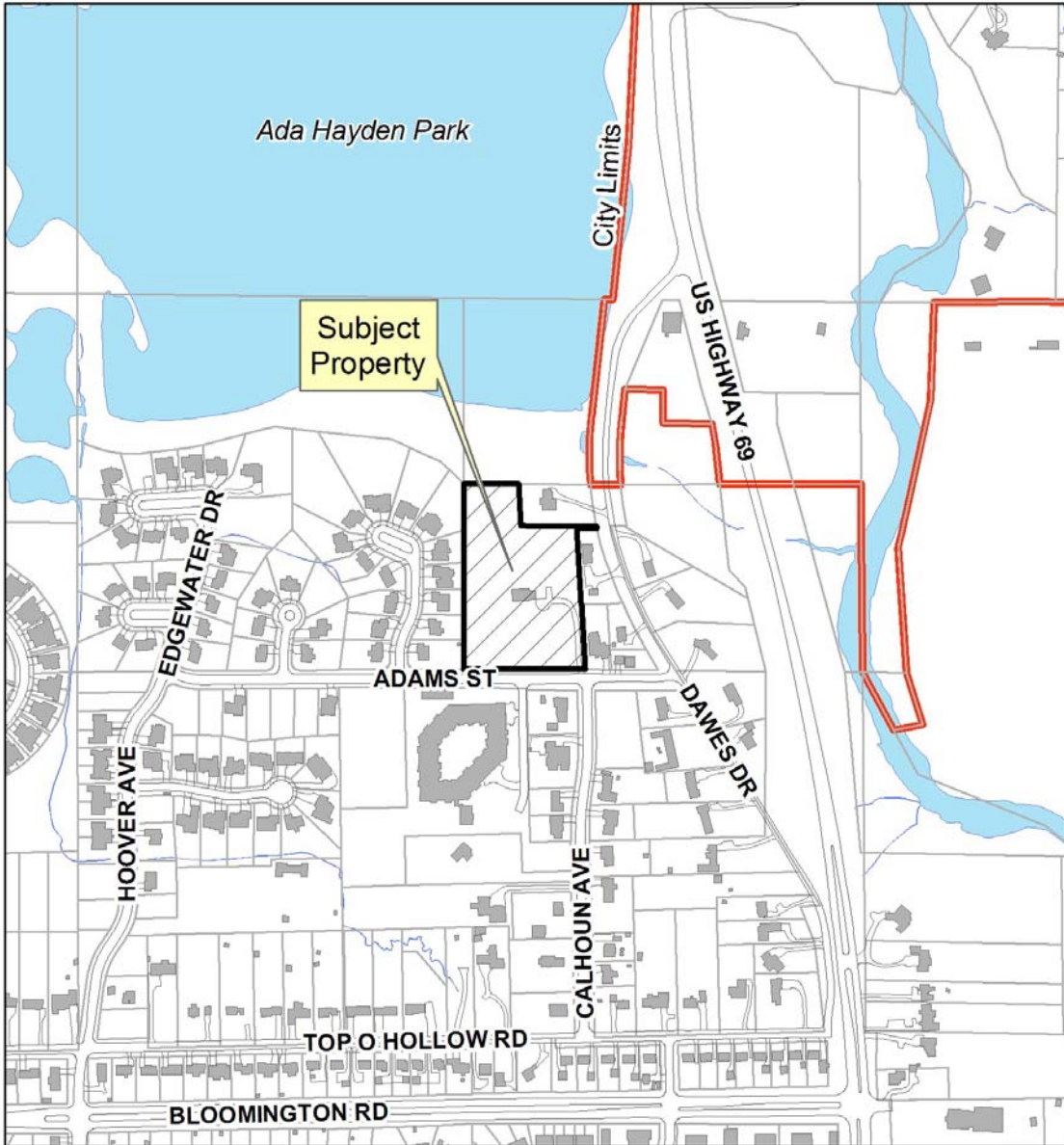
Section 1507, Zoning Text and Map Amendments, includes requirements for owners of land to submit a petition for amendment, a provision to allow the City Council to impose conditions on map amendments, provisions for notice to the public, and time limits for the processing of rezoning proposals.

Chapter 31 of the *Municipal Code* addresses the adopted Historic Preservation District regulations for the City of Ames.

Section 31.8. Procedures for Designation of a Historic District or Landmark. This section describes the data that must be submitted in the application requesting designation of a local historic district or landmark.

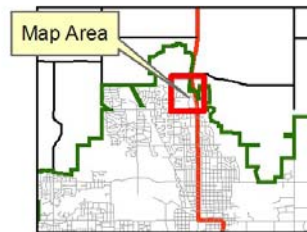
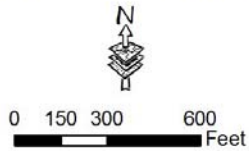
Attachment B

Location Map



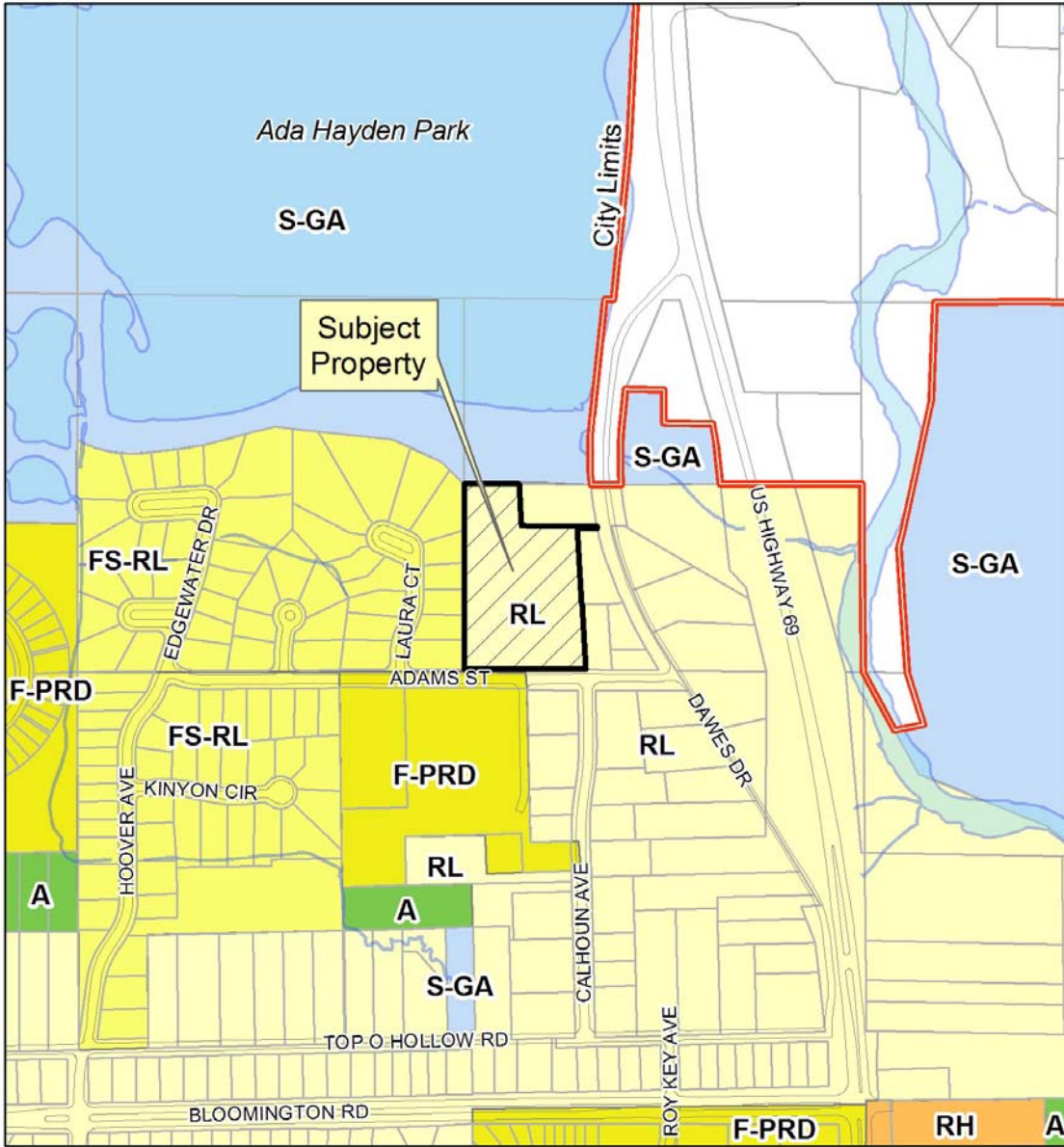
Location Map

1013 and 1025 Adams Street

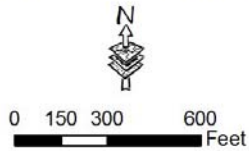


Attachment C

Existing Zoning



Existing Zoning 1013 and 1025 Adams Street



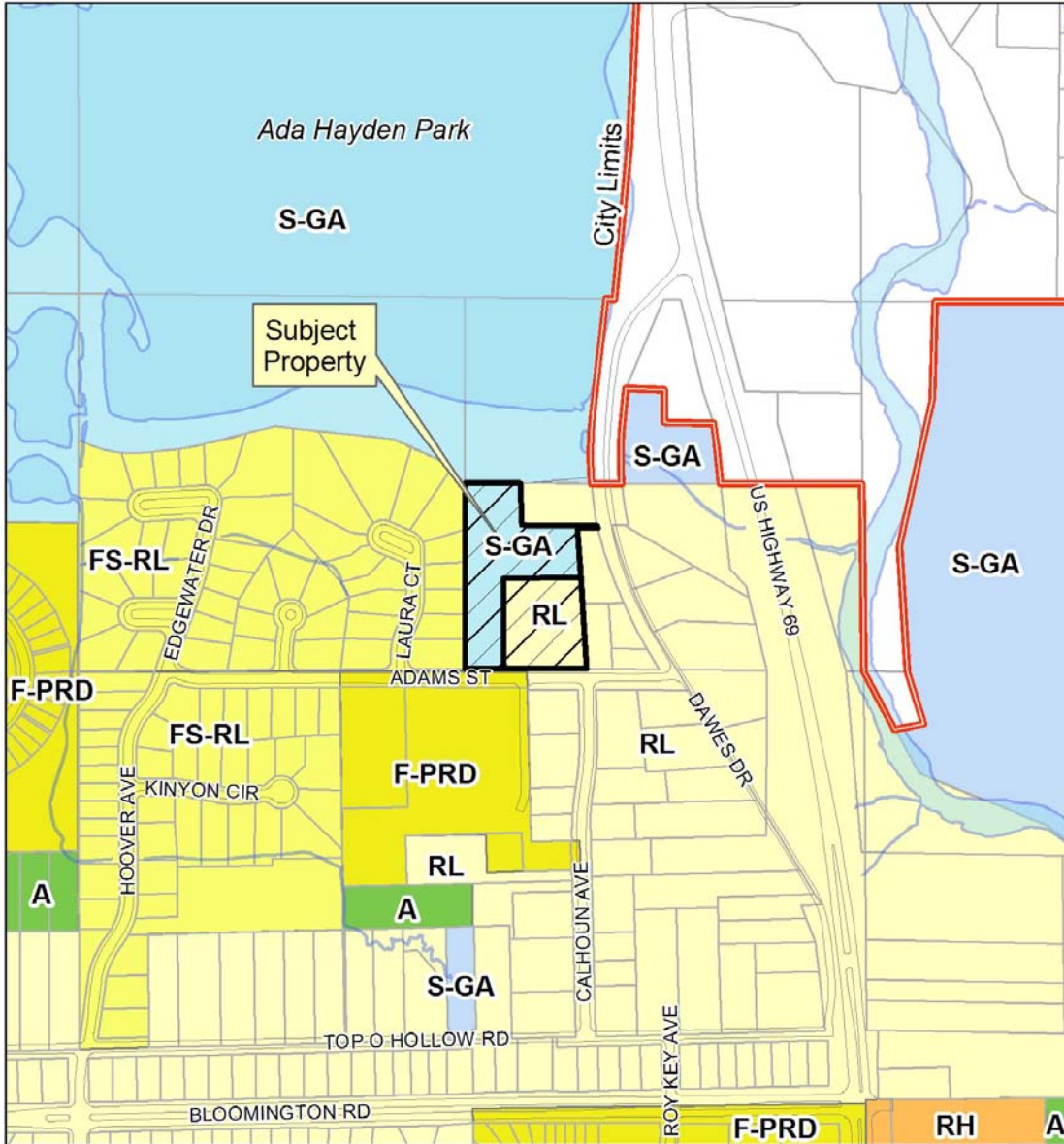
Legend

Zoning District

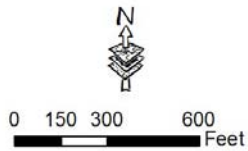
- Agricultural Zone "A"
- Residential Low Density Zone "RL"
- Residential High Density Zone "RH"
- Government/Airport District "S-GA"
- Suburban Residential Zone Residential Low Density "FS-RL"
- Planned Residence District "F-PRD"

Attachment D

Proposed Zoning



Proposed Zoning 1013 and 1025 Adams Street



Map Created by Department of
Planning & Housing
June 4, 2010

Legend

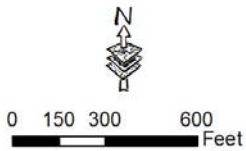
- Historic Preservation Overlay "O-H"
- Agricultural Zone "A"
- Residential Low Density Zone "RL"
- Residential High Density Zone "RH"
- Government/Airport District "S-GA"
- Suburban Residential Zone Residential Low Density "FS-RL"
- Planned Residence District "F-PRD"

Attachment E

Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use Map Designations 1013 and 1025 Adams Street



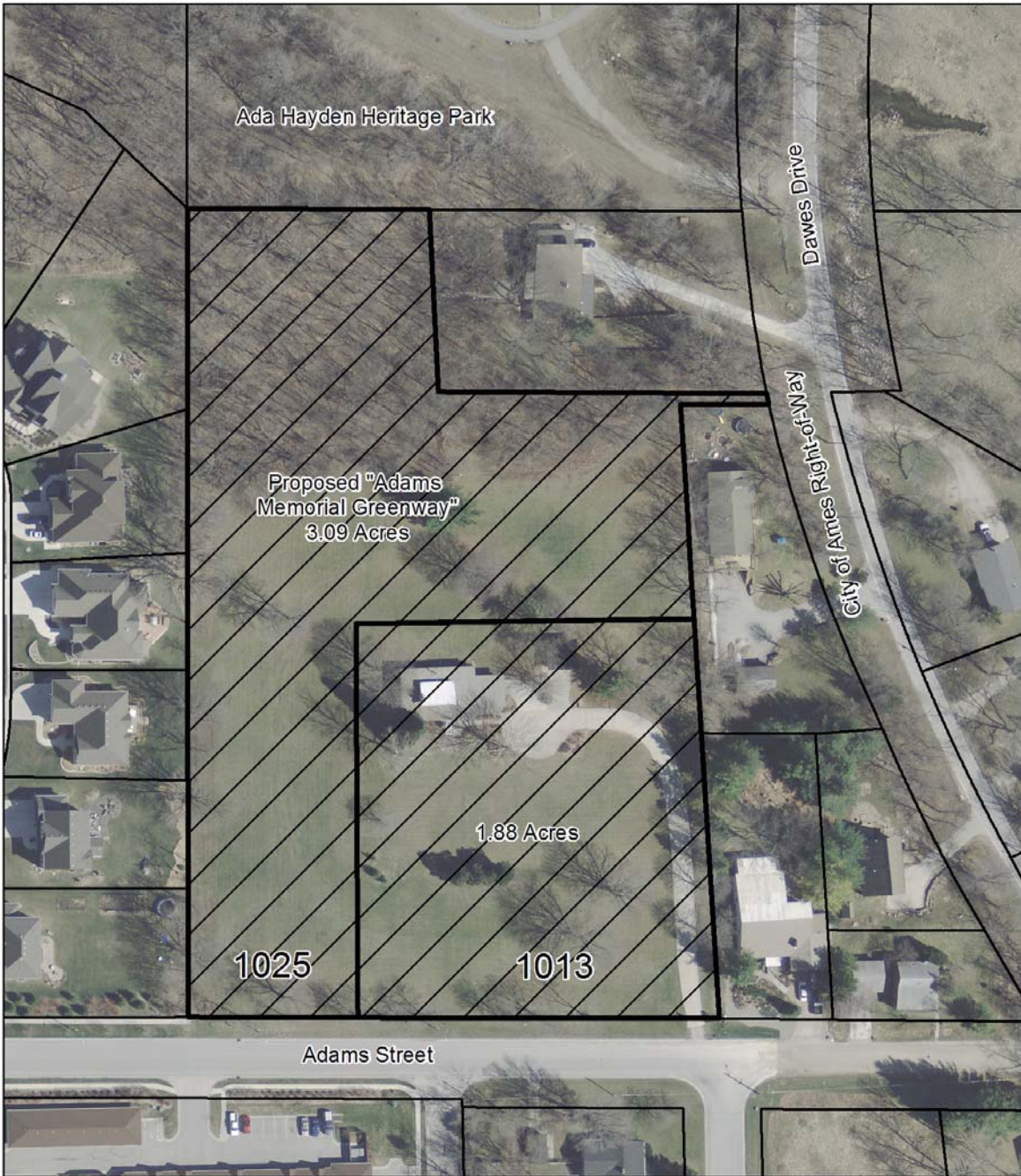
Map Created by Department of
Planning & Housing
June 4, 2010

Legend

- Low-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Village/Suburban Residential
- Parks and Open Space

Attachment F

Aerial Photo



Map Created by the
Department of Planning & Housing
June 4, 2010

1013 and 1025 Adams Street

Proposed Local Historic Landmark



0 75 150 Feet

2008 Color Aerial Imagery

Attachment G

Applicant Narrative

"PRAIRIE ARK" 1013 ADAMS STREET

For decades many north Ames residents have been curious about the modernistic Adams home rising from the gently sloping lawn at the intersection of Adams and Calhoun streets. Although the owners lead fairly private lives, close friends and special groups enjoyed the house through the years. Patients of Dr. Adams, an osteopath, were familiar with the home since his office was located on the lower level. Ames Area Amateur Astronomers knew the place from attending stargazing parties using the telescope in the backyard observatory. Local artists such as Christian Petersen were well acquainted with the high-ceilinged living room where so many stimulating conversations were held.

Comments addressing the significance of Prairie Ark and the need for its preservation may also be obtained from various professionals who have toured the home. These include Lea Rosson DeLong (independent curator and art historian); William Page (public historian and consultant for the State Historical Society); and Jerome Thompson (state curator for the State Historical Society).

BEQUEST

Dr. Adams passed away in 1994, and his wife, Mary, died this past spring leaving no immediate survivors. The couple strongly desired to protect their real estate from development and preserve their unique home for posterity. Through discussions with the City over the years, a will was drawn up to leave a legacy to the residents of Ames. The five-acre parcel of land at 1013 Adams Street was willed to the City of Ames "for park purposes to be enjoyed by the public in general" as well as the home, which "has some Frank Lloyd Wright features," to be used "as a meeting place or shelter." It was also their hope that the park "be named as the Adams Memorial Park in Remembrance of Bertrand R. Adams and Mary E. Adams."

The contents of the house were donated to the Ames Historical Society (AHS) to assure preservation of the art, antiques and 1950s medical office. This constituted the largest gift of historical materials yet received by that organization. Household goods not retained by AHS will be sold at auction next spring to raise funds to help preserve the Adams bequest. Bert and Mary were both savers. Consequently, quantities of prime archival materials and artifacts are preserved. These include historical regional artwork (Grant Wood, "Ding" Darling, Christian Petersen, Arnold Pyle, Harry Jones, Roscoe Lorenz); archival material (correspondence, documentation for building the house, photos, audio tapes); eclectic medical library; vintage therapy devices (Raylax table, Medcolator, Novafon, Acu-U-Meter, Electro-Acuscope); and intact medical office.

RESIDENTS

Dr. Bertrand R. Adams (1907-1994), was an osteopathic physician who practiced in Ames from 1944 until his retirement in 1991. Born on Meadow View Farm five miles south of Webster City, he was expected to continue his father's business of raising Poland-China hogs and Percheron horses. Instead he became fascinated with art and enrolled, after graduating from high school, in an art correspondence course offered by the Federal School of Commercial Designing. Based in Minneapolis, this was the premier art correspondence school in the nation. Bert persisted with the course for seven years and received his diploma in 1932. He graduated from the University of Iowa that same year with a degree in art and economics. Famed Iowa regionalist, Grant Wood, selected Bert as one of his 14 assistants to help paint a set of murals in the Iowa State College Library in 1934. Later he did two murals of his own design: "*Early Settlers of Dubuque*" (1937) for the Dubuque Post Office, and "*Lumbering in Arkansas*" (1940) for the post office in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. Bert is listed in "Iowa Artists of the First Hundred Years," and has been written up in the New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, and Architectural Record. At one time Bert traveled to California, intending to seek work as an animator at the Walt Disney studios. Persuaded by friends to pursue a career in medicine rather than art, he studied at the Des Moines Still College of Osteopathy and obtained his license in 1943. He set up practice at 213 ½ Main Street in 1944, eventually moving his office to the home he was building.

Although nominally an osteopathic physician, Bert pursued a holistic approach to health and promoted "wellness" before it became fashionable. Weight control was another of his specialties. He was interested in a broad spectrum of areas such as diet, exercise, nutrition, and organic food, and explored fringe areas of medicine like auriculo-therapy, acupuncture, reflexology, and electronic medicine. Bert also illustrated positive "town and gown" cooperation in Ames when he consulted with Jack Lathrop, technician with the ISU Physics Department, in constructing his Faraday cage for electromagnetic wave therapy. Beyond medicine and art his wide-ranging interests included hypnosis, auras, psychic phenomena, graphology, phrenology, astronomy, astrology, world religions, music, building and gardening. He "always had his head in a book" according to his wife. Bert was a member of Collegiate United Methodist Church, Ames Area Amateur Astronomers, Ames Lions Club, Pi Gamma Alpha fraternity, American Osteopathic Association, International Academy of Preventative Medicine, a charter member and past president of the Town and College Toastmaster's Club, and past vice-president of the American Federation of Astrology.

Mary E. Beymer Adams (1909-2005) was an accomplished artist in her own right. She grew up in Des Moines where her father was owner and operator of Beymer Company, an electrical business, from 1909 until the 1940s. Mary enjoyed a privileged childhood taking piano, dance and riding lessons. After graduating from North High School in 1927, she attended Capital City Commercial College (now A.I.B.), followed by two years at Drake University. In 1931 she transferred to the University of Iowa where she graduated the following year with a degree in art. Mary then taught for awhile as a substitute middle school teacher in the Des Moines School District. She also worked at a

photographer's studio hand-tinting photographs before the days of color photography. From 1935-1956 she was employed as cashier and later as secretary at the Des Moines Water Works business office at 10th and Locust. There she got to know Arie den Boer, the Dutchman for whom the Water Works arboretum is named.

Mary continued her artistic interests by taking classes at the Des Moines Art Center and studying with Eliot O'Hara in Laguna Beach, California. She especially loved to travel, riding a bus to Mexico, flying to Hawaii, and sailing to Europe on the Queen Mary for the "grand tour." As testimony to Mary's enduring patience, she married classmate Bertrand Adams after waiting 25 years for him to "pop the question." They finally wed in Des Moines in 1956, at which time Mary moved into Prairie Ark in Ames. The couple enjoyed many trips together – Hawaii (again) for a honeymoon, much of the U.S. while traveling to medical meetings, Stone City for the annual Grant Wood reunions, and a tour of the Holy Land in 1970. Although the couple had no children, they helped raise Mary's nephew, William Wolters. Bill followed in Bert and Mary's footsteps, graduating from the University of Iowa and becoming an accomplished artist and military history buff as well. His untimely death in 1997 was a severe blow to the couple.

Throughout her long life Mary continued to enjoy sketching, painting in oils and watercolor, doing graphic art for the Ames Woman's Club (AWC), and with Bert, creating their annual Christmas card design. She also bowled for the AWC and was the oldest member of a Des Moines bridge club she joined in 1933. A granddaughter of the first mayor of Carlisle, Iowa, she inherited many family heirlooms and historical records which she organized. Both Bert and Mary were savers, and thus preserved many invaluable records for posterity.

HOUSE

When Bert moved to Ames in 1944 he lived in a rented second floor apartment at 803 Duff owned by Minnie Siverly, the widow of Union Story banker, Clyde Siverly. Bert had been discussing the dream house he wanted to build ever since he met Mary during their university days in Iowa City. He finally took action on July 6, 1948 through a contract with Dorothy Hunter to purchase a piece of land for the price of \$3500, with \$500 down. Between 1949 and 1958, Bert was engaged in building Prairie Ark on farmland at the north edge of Ames. A gravel road, later to become Adams Street, first had to be graded from old Highway 69 (now Dawes Drive) to his building site. For a number of years the address was simply Rural Route 1.

The basement was dug on the site of a previous farmhouse, and the excavated soil was used to create a broad mound to showcase the house. Prairie Ark was constructed entirely of concrete – a permanent material designed to last well into the next century. Foundation and walls were blocks, joists were precast I-beams, and floors were poured. Bricks and glass blocks were also used. Dr. Adams not only designed his home, but personally oversaw and assisted with much of the construction done by 28 different workmen. Considerable documentation of the nine-year project exists in the form of drawings, written records, and photographs.

The structure incorporated cutting edge materials and concepts for residential construction at the time. Features include: vaulted ceiling and clerestory in living room, cantilevered corner windows, frequent use of rounded corners, built-in storage, solid birch doors, parquet and cork flooring, and glassed window wells for plants. Examples of integrated design include a wall for a 12-foot sofa and an alcove created in the dining room area for a cherry buffet that Bert designed and had made by Krauss Furniture in South Amana. The lower level was planned for his medical practice, and included a reception room, treatment and therapy rooms, pharmacy, lab room, and office study. A unique item is the screened-in 6 x 6' Faraday cage used for therapy. Prairie Ark is a rare example of a self-designed, home doctor's office in Ames. While other doctors have built an addition (Dr. Fausch) or converted a porch (Dr. Walker) for use as an office, Bert designed his as an integral part of the home. Typical of Ames residents, his fascination with technology and gadgets is reflected throughout the house.

GUESTS

The list of visitors at Prairie Ark through the years is most interesting. Artists associated with Grant Wood have been guests, in particular Christian Petersen with wife Charlotte and daughter Mary, Lee Allen, and John and Isabel Bloom. University people such as Don Schuster (Psychology) and Jack Lathrop (Physics) have also been frequent visitors. At one time Bert taught astrology classes in his home. Bert's patient list includes a cross-section of the Ames population. Former patients recall making unscheduled visits while Bert was engaged in construction, and having him give osteopathic manipulation with tar-stained hands in unfinished rooms or even on the roof in one instance. As mentioned previously, the local astronomy club delighted in meeting on clear summer nights to use his 10" Astrola telescope. Petting the sheep, goats, and ponies Bert formerly kept in the fenced pasture was a favorite activity for neighborhood children. The home represents a wonderful piece of history associated with Ames residents for more than half a century.

ARCHITECTURE

Tom Leslie, AIA.

The Adams Residence is a good, well-preserved example of residential modern architecture. Its early date (1948, from my understanding) marks it as among the earliest examples in Iowa of its type. It shows the distinct influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's "Usonian" houses (in particular the Goetsch-Winkler House in Okemos, MI, of 1939 and the Herbert Jacobs House in Madison, WI, of 1937) on its designer/builder and the house is a unique and, I believe, fairly sophisticated interpretation of Wright's principles.

In particular, the house adopts Wright's interest in solar orientation very well. Its clerestory roof uses sunshading, a light shelf, and a thermally massive interior to achieve an efficient natural illumination scheme. This is a fairly advanced arrangement for its

day, and it anticipates a long and important technical tradition in Iowa architecture that has involved passive solar heating and lighting. Its use of materials—in particular concrete masonry and steel windows—is likewise innovative for its day. Modern housing was an important development in postwar America, and while much of this construction occurred on both coasts there was a significant school of modern residential architecture in Iowa. While much modern housing in Iowa dates from the 1950s, the Adams House is contemporaneous with such postwar developments as the Case Study projects in California and a national solar design competition sponsored by Libbey-Owens-Ford. As such it is a good example—rare in Iowa—of the innovative techniques and designs that emerged in the late 1940s. While its most immediate affinity is to Wright’s work, it has some ‘moderne’ features (curved interior walls and corner windows) and other elements that look forward to the more rigorously modernist work of the 1950s.

The Building Assessment Report suggests that, as this was owner-built (an “individual’s quest to build a contemporary home”), the result is “lacking a high level of architectural sophistication.” I believe this is open to argument. No one would mistake the Adams House for an actual Wright home, but as an example of the early diffusion of modernist principles throughout the Midwest it certainly demands attention and, I believe, preservation. Its builder was certainly an amateur, but he was very clearly absorbing many of the interesting experiments and statements being built throughout the country at the time.

Others can perhaps comment more authoritatively on the building’s condition, its potential use, and its relation to Ames’ history. I agree that its use would be limited to small groups, and that there would need to be some work done to achieve accessibility (though perhaps, as we discussed, less than the BAR suggests). However I believe the Adams House is worth preserving as a fine—and very early—example of an important tradition in Iowa, that of modern residential construction.

Attachment H

Proposed Design Criteria

PROPOSED DESIGN CRITERIA

Tom Leslie, AIA

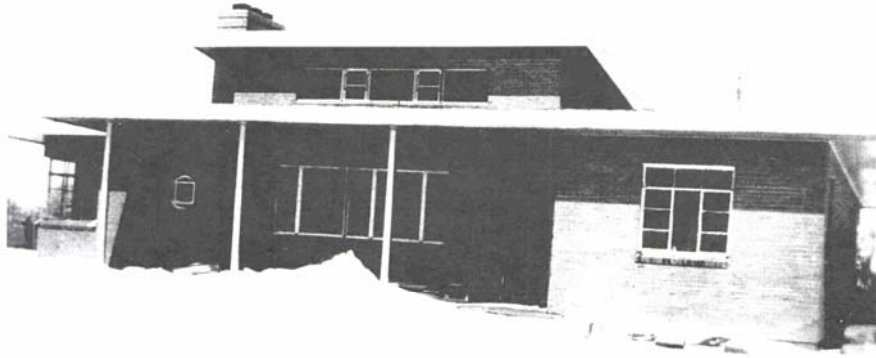
1. The Adams House is a mixture of late Prairie School and Postwar Modern styles of architecture. Details of design and dimensions of distinct architectural elements of the building, as shown on the building plans prepared by the builder, Bertrand Adams, shall be followed and conformed to for all alterations or new construction of additions to the building.
2. Substitute materials may be allowed if they are consistent with the historic materials in size, design and texture. Proposals for substitute materials must be expressed with specificity in the application for Certificate of Appropriateness.
3. The Adams' House relationship to its grassy, open site is an essential aspect of its Landmark status. Alterations or changes in use that alter the visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds shall be discouraged.
4. All alterations and newly constructed additions shall conform to the following characteristics of the building:

- Building Height: One-and-a-half stories, not including the basement
- Roof Type & Pitch: Nominally flat with a slight slope to the clerestory that opens up toward the south.
- Dormers: None, however the central clerestory is an integral element in the building's massing and primary elevation.
- Entry: Via a porch on the south side, with alternate entry toward driveway on east.
- Exterior Materials: Brick and Concrete Masonry Walls. Built-up roofing with metal edge/parapet. Concrete paving to front porch, walkway and driveway. Steel pipe columns support roof over porch. Alterations and/or repairs should match color and pattern of existing brick.
- Windows: Narrow sash steel windows with predominantly horizontal muntin pattern and metallic finish. Corner windows should be restored, as possible, to their original, more open configuration.
- Solid/Void Ratio: Maintain position and size of all large scale openings (doors, windows, etc.) Additional openings as required for accessibility or egress improvements should coordinate with the existing rhythm and pattern of voids.
- Plan/Footprints: Generally open plan with service areas (kitchen and bath) along the north edge. Predominantly east-west orientation with windows along the south side.
- Landscape: Generally open with small shrubs near house. Provision for daylighting of central rooms is key to the house's aesthetic concept and should be preserved.

Attachment I

Historic Photos of the House

(Submitted with the Application for Designation as a Local Historic Landmark)



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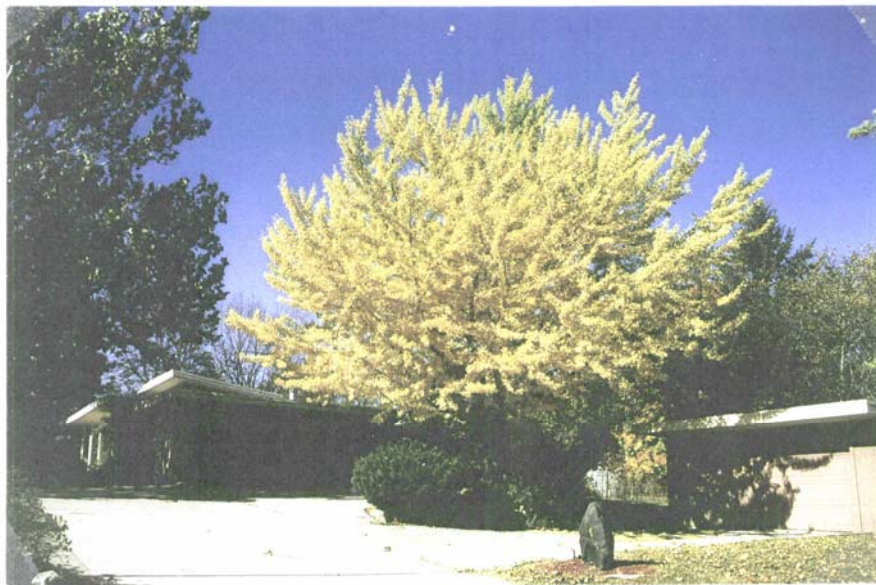
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