

Historic District Walking Tour

## College Heights Neighborhood

**T**he College  
Heights Neigh-  
borhood Walking  
Tour is one of three



*self-guided residential tours developed to highlight the Borough's architectural heritage.*

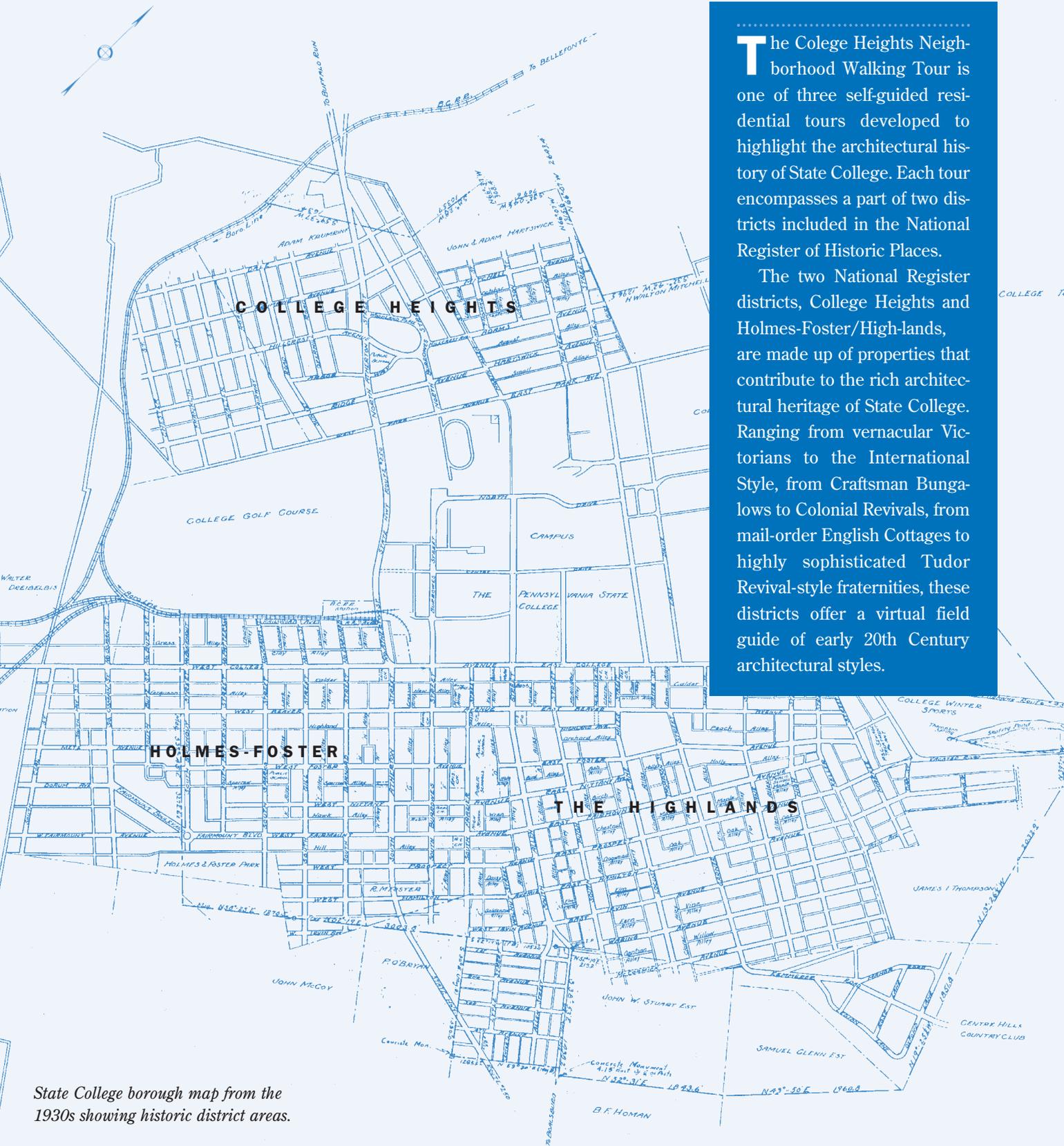


*Each tour encom-  
passes a part of two  
districts included  
in the National*

*Register of Historic Places, listed in 1995.*

*Properties within the  
districts contribute to  
the architectural  
history of developing  
State College and offer  
a full range of Early  
20th Century styles.*





The College Heights Neighborhood Walking Tour is one of three self-guided residential tours developed to highlight the architectural history of State College. Each tour encompasses a part of two districts included in the National Register of Historic Places.

The two National Register districts, College Heights and Holmes-Foster/Highlands, are made up of properties that contribute to the rich architectural heritage of State College. Ranging from vernacular Victorians to the International Style, from Craftsman Bungalows to Colonial Revivals, from mail-order English Cottages to highly sophisticated Tudor Revival-style fraternities, these districts offer a virtual field guide of early 20th Century architectural styles.

State College borough map from the 1930s showing historic district areas.

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## State College, Pennsylvania

*Incorporated in 1896*

Most Pennsylvania communities had peaked and then receded in building activities when State College, enjoying the economic stability of Penn State, was in its building heyday.

As early as 1904 the *State College Times* cited a housing shortage. Even though some proportion of faculty were able to achieve home ownership, many instructors, support staff, and off-campus students sought rental space. The demand was met by alley houses at the rear of lots and by boarding houses, some with fraternity associations.

In 1912 more than seventy building tradesmen — contractors, carpenters, painters and paperhangers, plasterers, plumbers, stone and brick masons — provided their services to a town with a population of only 1,650.

Subdivisions were developed to meet this building boom for a local population with a sophisticated interest in architectural housing choices. This development coincided with the increased availability of nationally stylish residential options provided through pattern books and by mail-order companies, and locally through faculty members with architectural design expertise.

*An architect-designed house in East College Heights.*



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## College Heights Historic District

The College Heights Historic District encompasses land and historic buildings associated with the residential history of State College from its incorporation in 1896 to 1941 and the beginning of World War II. The district, spanning North Atherton Street, is bounded by Holmes Street to the east; Park Avenue to the south; and a jagged western and northern edge along Sunset Road, Ridge, Hillcrest, Woodland, and Mitchell Avenues.

Farms formerly owned by John and Frederick Krumrine and Henry Hartswick make up most of the lands upon which the historic district is located. John Krumrine's 1852 house still stands at the corner of Ridge Avenue and Burrowes Street. The remainder of the district's properties represent a rich sampler of early 20th century design and construction. Included are pattern book, mail-order, and architect-designed houses offering diversity in age, style, and scale.

Given its proximity to the Penn State campus, College Heights was from its beginnings developed for people associated with the University. Students found accommodations in rooming houses, duplexes, and larger apartment buildings particularly along East Park Avenue and North Allen Street closest to campus, while single family homes were built for staff and faculty members and their families along the remainder of its attractive residential streets.

The College Heights Association was formed in 1924, "composed of those persons holding property in the so-called Park Avenue section, north of the College campus." The neighborhood's development was promoted this way:

*Apart from its altitude, it borders the college woods and the golf links, giving to this section a beautiful setting which at the same time is healthful. The Association feels that here is a section that promises to be the garden spot of State College.*

Reflecting this garden flavor, mature trees, many of them fifty or sixty years old and with circumferences of over sixteen feet, line and serve as a canopy over streets with names like Sunset Road, Fairway Road (oriented north from the golf links), Park Avenue, Ridge Avenue, Arbor Way, and Woodland Drive. Properties are set back in a consistent line on fairly spacious landscaped lots along these well-maintained tree-lined streets.

### Mail-Order Housing

The Gordon-Van Tine Co., Aladdin Co., and Sears, Roebuck and Co., provided plans and materials to many home buyers in the new residential neighborhoods of State College.

These companies offered not only the latest in style choices to meet space needs, budgets, and specific tastes of their buyers, but total house packages with first-rate materials. Building parts arrived by railroad, pre-cut and numbered. Sears also offered household furnishings to enhance the design, along

with a mortgage plan to help owners acquire their new homes. It included a guarantee that promised satisfaction or Sears would pay all shipping costs and refund the purchase price.

Once the lots and foundations were ready, the homes were assembled by local builders or possibly even by the purchasers themselves. For the convenience of the builder, shipping dates were staggered so that materials arrived when they were needed. Materials came from several sources and were carried to State College on the Bellefonte Central Railroad. In one shipment, for example: leaded glass, moulding, paneled doors and nails came from Newark; hardware, curtain poles, and window shades arrived from Philadelphia; paint and varnish was shipped from Summerdale, Pennsylvania; radiators came from Bayonne, New Jersey; bathroom fixtures from Camden; wood shingles from Detroit; quarry tile from Kushequa; and firebrick from Bolivar, Pennsylvania.



*A sampling of historic properties have been highlighted for this walking tour of the College Heights Historic District. The tour begins at Sunset Park where parking is available. West of Ather-ton Street, limited parking is available on some side streets.*

*Catalog pages showing exteriors and floor plans. Sears "Amsterdam," a Dutch Colonial; a Gordon-Van Tine four square; and a Gordon-Van Tine bungalow.*

## 1 Sunset Park

In 1941, members of the College Heights Association initiated the idea of creating a neighborhood park in a wooded area on land that was still part of the Henry Hartswick estate. Permission to use the park temporarily was given by the Hartswick family and its development was underway with contributions of time and money by College Heights residents. One of them, Penn State landscape architect Walter Trainer, provided not only the know-how but equipment for leveling and seeding. Sunset Park eventually become part of the Centre Region's park system. In 1982 when additional wooded property became available, College Heights residents, in a door-to-door effort, succeeded in raising enough funds to make the purchase possible.

*By the early 1930s, 1½- to 2-story Romantic Revival styles reflecting historic houses of the past were in high demand throughout the country. Locally, State College Borough residents looked to area architects and mail-order catalogs to provide them with examples. Houses at the corner of Mitchell Avenue and Holmes Street offer good examples of the versatility, architectural variety, and individuality of these offerings.*

## 2 422 Mitchell Avenue

Physics professor David Rank and his wife Catherine selected Penn State architecture professor Clarence Bauchspies to design this duplex in 1934 and another around the corner (742 Holmes) as part of their development of a large corner property on Mitchell Avenue and Holmes Street. Both of these wood-framed, stone-faced Colonial Revival properties are now being used as single family homes. Bauchspies received his bachelor's degree in architecture from Penn State in 1927, and his master's degree in 1932. He became a registered architect, a faculty member, and by 1939 had designed at least fourteen other houses in College Heights, several of them identified in this tour.

## 3 750 Holmes Street

The first property the Ranks had built on their Holmes/Mitchell corner was their own 1930s Sears, Roebuck & Co. English cottage, the *Colchester*. With

its stone exterior facing, crescent window, round-arched front door, and distinctive chimney, it was described as "a home of outstanding beauty," in the mail-order catalog.

## 6 433 Mitchell Avenue

Across the street the George Guilletts chose another Tudor cottage-style stone Sears, Roebuck & Co. home in 1933.



As was possible with Sears plans, Dr. Guillet, a professor of mechanical engineering, and his family chose to cus-

tomize their home with higher ceilings to allow for a more elaborate central staircase.

## 5 747 Holmes Street

Also in the early 1930s and on the opposite corner, another faculty family, the Maurice Gjesdahls, selected the *Attleboro*. This two-story Cape Cod "achieves distinction with its fine doorway, dormers, shuttered windows, and correct architectural details" according to the Sears catalog. This house was featured in the National Trust 1986 publication, *Houses by Mail*.



*State College architects and landscape architects also were experimenting with some of the contemporary architectural styles of the 1930s and 1940s, and Holmes Street has some examples.*

## 6 732 Holmes Street

Soon after designing his own International style home on West Park Avenue in West College Heights, architecture professor Kenneth Heidrich worked with fellow faculty member Henry Brunner, head of the department of rural education, on the design for Brunner's 1940 home.

**7 8** **722 & 721 Holmes Street**  
Architect Clarence Bauchspies offered new homeowners a variety of sizeable houses in fairly elaborate period styles. Two of them, located



directly across from each other, range from a well-designed clapboard Colonial Revival with an hooded entrance and side porch...to this handsome stone English Tudor example with its steeply pitched roof and decorative half-timbering.

**9** **705 Holmes Street**  
Carl W. Wild, a professor of landscape architecture, designed his own International style home in 1937. Wild has left his architectural stamp on the community in other ways as well, particularly in his award winning design for the layout of Park Forest Village. Appropriately, the current owner of this property has richly contributed to its landscape with an outstanding garden featuring old roses.

**10** **625 Holmes Street**  
In 1937 Clarence Bauchspies designed this home, a hipped-roof brick with a central chimney in the Colonial Revival style. It is another example of Bauchspies' versatility in providing sophisticated architectural choices popular across the country to College Heights residents.



*For walkers who would like to extend the tour slightly — a few of several additional properties worth noting.*

**A** **519 Holmes Street**  
This home belonged to Harrison Arnold, a professor of romance languages and an accomplished botanist. Dr. Arnold explored, identified, and wrote about the flora of the area until shortly before his 100th birthday in 1989. Some of his fine plantings remain.

**B** **303 East Park Avenue**  
This stone bungalow, built in 1929, and its Colonial Revival style neighbors have served as a welcoming architectural entrance to State College along East Park Avenue for more than sixty years.

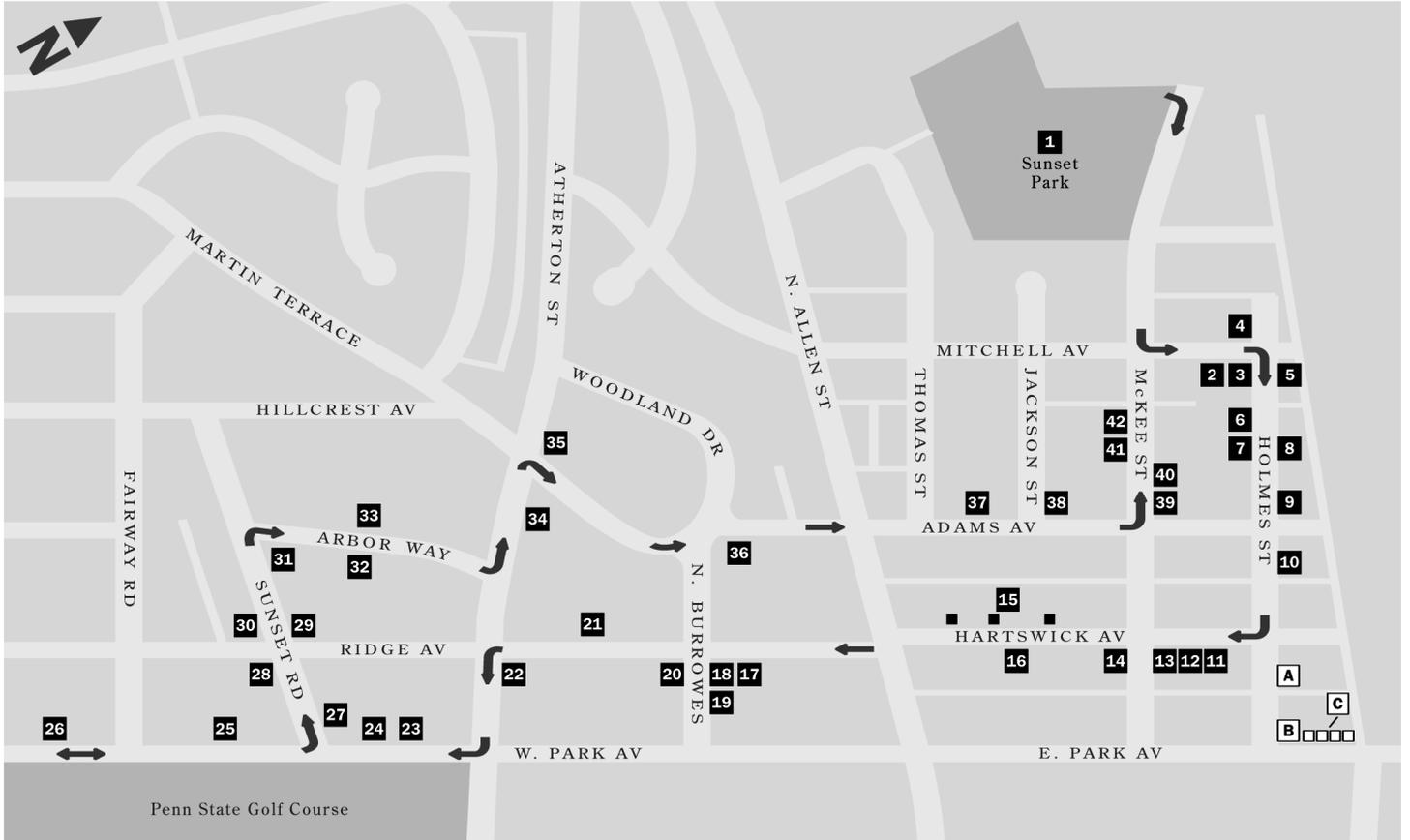
**C** **311, 317, 323, 327 East Park Avenue**  
These four small two-story houses are examples of architect Clarence Bauchspies' earliest efforts (1935), each borrowing classical details and each representing a different Colonial Revival style that Bauchspies defined. The French example (311), faced with uncoursed stone, has an entry porch with pediment, a side ell, and wall-gabled dormers extending through the cornice. Next door (317), the Dutch Colonial Revival has a coursed stone main floor facade with a central entrance, and a three-bay clapboard shed dormer from a gambrel roof. The Georgian Colonial (323) and the New England Colonial (317) both have elaborate porticos, side hall entrances, coursed-stone façades, and dormer windows.

**11** **214 Hartswick Avenue**  
If a buyer did not need a large home, cottages such as this one were available through Sears, Roebuck and Co. Called the *Rosita*, this 700 square foot hipped-roof bungalow with clapboard siding and trellised front porch could be ordered for less than \$1000.

**12** **210 Hartswick Avenue**  
Four-Squares, such as this one, were popular style choices from the early 1900s through the 1920s. Many buyers agreed with the Gordon-Van Tine catalog's description, "There is nothing that answers your purpose so well, if room is required, as the big, square house." Examples of these two story houses with low pyramidal roofs, dormers, and verandahs running the full width of the first floor, can be found throughout the older sections of College Heights and the Borough.

**13 14** **525 McKee & 172 Hartswick**  
P. Boyd Kapp, a Penn State architectural engineering graduate, opened a practice in State College in the 1920s. He was responsible for several

# College Heights Neighborhood Walking Tour Map



*Parking, restroom, and picnic facilities are available at Sunset Park.*

*Pedestrian crossing signals are located on the south (Nittany Lion Inn) side of Park Avenue and at Hillcrest Avenue.*

	Tour route
	Noted property along main route
	Noted property off main route

fine residential properties in both the College Heights and the Holmes-Foster/Highlands Historic Districts. He is credited with the design of this McKee Street brick Colonial Revival with its handsome Georgian-style doorway, and the stuccoed Spanish or Mission Revival style home across the street. Note how the windows are trimmed in exposed brick and stone. Both houses date from 1929.

**15 100 Block, Hartswick Avenue**  
“Honest structures” built with “honest materials” was the architectural goal of early bungalows such as several examples located on the north side of this block. Note the sloping roofs that extend over large open front porches, held up by heavy supports — such as the properties at 151, 133, and 123 Hartswick. Bungalows, many of them provided by mail-order companies, were popular in State College and across the country during the first two decades of the 20th century.

**16 140 Hartswick Avenue**  
This 1858 farm house was originally located on the Penn State campus where it served as an early faculty home. When it was moved to its new location in 1918, it underwent major architectural changes to more closely reflect the styles of the houses around it.

*While most of the College Heights Historic District was laid out on the typical Pennsylvania grid of streets and alleys, grid shifts in alignment occurred where family farms abutted. Hartswick Avenue jogs slightly and becomes Ridge Avenue at Allen Street reflecting two adjacent early farms.*

**17 144 Ridge Avenue**  
Faculty member Arthur W. Cowell was a strong contributor to the development of College Heights as the “garden spot of State College.” The first head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Penn State, Cowell laid out a portion of East College Heights and named its streets, and by 1920 had built this Sears, Roebuck and Co. Dutch Colonial, one of the first



Sears houses in College Heights. It is a good example of the style with a gambrel roof, shed-roofed dormer, and a central pedimented-porch entryway. Cowell customized his mail-order home by lowering the windows so that his young children could look out on the gardens he had designed for the property.

**18 154 Ridge Avenue**  
Penn State professor Frederick C. Disque was responsible for the design of four fine fraternity buildings in State College. He also was the architect for residential properties including this Tudor Revival. Built in 1928 for history professor Asa Martin, this handsome house combines brick on the main floor and stucco with half-timbering and other



wood decoration on the upper floors. A sharply pitched cross-gable extends on the left side to incorporate a porch. It is echoed by a smaller version that provides an entrance to the house. About 1930, Disque left Penn State to become a professor of architecture at the University of Virginia.

**19 511 North Burrowes Street**  
This is one of the few remaining Queen Anne-style houses in College Heights, reflecting the Victorian architecture of the 19th century. Built in 1910, its steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, its facade combination of wood shingles and brick facing, and its full-width front porch are some of the characteristics of this housing style.

**20 524 North Burrowes Street**

Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity was one of two fraternity organizations located in College Heights in the 1920s. (The other, Tau Sigma Tau, was at 207 East Park.) In 1929 Tau Kappa Epsilon moved to the newly developing fraternity district in the Highlands area. This large house with a Mansard roof — a steeply pitched concave roof with dormers — is characteristic of a French style called Second Empire. The building has continued to house students as a rooming house and now with apartments for more than seventy-five years.

**21 235 Ridge Avenue**

In addition to professors of architecture, some faculty members who possessed the skills required to draw up original plans and specify details were active in designing their own homes. In the 1930s, John W. Breneman, a professor of engineering mechanics, designed a Colonial Revival for himself at 615 N. Burrowes and this English Tudor Revival for a faculty colleague.

**22 256 Ridge Avenue**

Several properties in College Heights were built by or for members of the Krumrine-Hartswick families, original College Heights property owners. This fine example in the Dutch Colonial style was the home of G. Dewey Krumrine, operator of the College Heights Service Station.

*A collection of several large, well-designed, Colonial Revival-style homes were built along West Park Avenue during the 1920s and 1930s that carefully reflect the architectural characteristics of their 18th and early 19th century predecessors. Three of them noted on this tour were built for Penn State administrators and faculty members who also have campus buildings named for them.*

**23 325 West Park Avenue**

Evenly placed windows and a handsomely detailed front entrance provide symmetry and balance to this uncoursed stone colonial style house. Typical of the carefully detailed interpretations of this style, the doorway has a fanlight and sidelights with leaded tracery; its hooded portico or porch is

supported by slender columns. With a central hall and rooms on either side, it offered more than 3000 square feet of living space to its new owner when it was built in 1932. Dr. Bruce V. Moore was a professor of psychology; the Moore Building off Park Avenue and Allen Road bears his name.

**24 333 West Park Avenue**

Uncoursed, rough cut stone faces this Colonial Revival house, built for Dr. W.G. Chambers and his family in 1925. A special architectural feature of this house is the pent roof with a hood over the



front entry, that separates the first and second floors. Both this and the Moore house have side porches, also typical of

this historic revival style. Dr. Chambers was dean of the College of Education; Chambers Building near Allen Road serves as the College's headquarters.

**25 423 West Park Avenue**

This large brick faced Colonial Revival was also built in 1925. Symmetrical like the other two, it has three evenly placed roof dormers, and a triple set of windows on either side of a Georgian style doorway with a wooden fanlight. Its first owner was W.P. Davey, professor of physics and chemistry. Davey Lab, located on Pollock Road, honors his accomplishments.

**26 525 West Park Avenue**

Architect P. Boyd Kapp and his partner, Henley Eden, also a Penn State graduate, were responsible for the design of this handsome 1931 English Tudor at 525 W.

Park. It was the home for many years of Hemingway scholar Philip Young. It includes architectural details common to



this historic revival design — a high-pitched cross-gable, slate roof, white stucco over brick veneer, casement windows, and half timbering over a gabled-porch.

*Additional architectural examples of a variety of housing styles are located along West Park Avenue, including on the 700 block Prairie and modernistic designs that were built in the 1960s. They are too recent to be included in the historic district, but are eligible for future inclusion. The University golf course continues to provide College Heights residents with “a garden spot,” green space, and a fine view of the Tussey Mountain to the south.*

### 27 503 Sunset Road

This Dutch Colonial, dating from the early 1920s, was the first house to be built along West Park Avenue and the golf course.

### 28 526 Sunset Road

This is a further example (1936) of the many well built Sears, Roebuck & Co. houses that contribute to the State College Borough’s architectural heritage. Excellent materials and good design allow them to continue to compare favorably with homes designed by local architects. The availability of



both high quality stone and capable stone masons brought an extra level of permanence to these mail-order homes.

### 29 363 Ridge Avenue

The Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalog described this model, the *Lynnhaven*, as a “cheerful well-proportioned residence with deep set door and flower boxes.” A popular style in College Heights (another example is at 620 Sunset Road) and throughout the Borough, this house has an added feature, a porte cochere. It was the home of Dr. Mary Willard, a noted criminologist, and her father, mathematics professor Joseph Willard. The Willard Building on campus recognizes his prominence.

### 30 31 608 & 629 Sunset Road

Architect Clarence Bauchspies designed this richly detailed brownstone English Tudor for his family in 1935 (608 Sunset), along with two others nearby — a Colonial Revival in brick with front bay windows at 346 Ridge Avenue, and



this simple but carefully balanced limestone three-bay Georgian Revival with entrance porch and decorated doorway. They are another set of examples of Bauchspies’ versatility and his rich contribution to the architectural development of College Heights.

*Note how the houses are angled on the lots along Sunset Road.*

### 32 338 Arbor Way

Built in 1932, this is another example of what was available to local residents from Sears, Roebuck and Co. Its front gardens offer authenticity to its English cottage style.

### 33 335 Arbor Way

Perhaps the property that P. Boyd Kapp and his partner, Dean Kennedy, are best known for is this one built for the John Haugh family in 1935. With the Haughs’ involvement and the help of skilled contractor John Henszey, local craftsmen used native materials of hand-hewn timbers, hammer-worked stone, and thick, irregular slate shingles to build this large stone English Tudor. The



stone came from the Sand Mountain area of nearby Bear Meadows. Two sets of tall double chimneys with chimneys pots, a cross gable with a leaded-glass window, other metal casement windows glazed in diagonal patterns, and a pronounced stone entrance porch with a heavy wooden door and iron hardware are some of the architectural details of this fine property. The landscape plan, designed by Arthur Cowell, is still fairly intact.

*This contemporary home at 327 Arbor Way was designed in 1956 by William Hajjar, former head of Penn State's Department of Architecture. It is one of several homes he designed in the 1950s and 1960s.*

### 34 College Heights School

When Adam Krumrine donated land for a new College Heights school, architects P. Boyd Kapp and Henley Eden provided the design and William Kennedy served as the contractor. Members of the College Heights Association volunteered to do the landscaping under Arthur Cowell's direction in this community effort. Cowell, after leaving Penn State, developed landscape designs for several locations in Pennsylvania including the state park at Washington Crossing and Harrisburg's Capitol grounds.



### 35 College Heights Exxon

This station, owned for many years by the Krumrine family, is the only commercial property in the district. It has served as the neighborhood's service station since 1935.

### 36 136 Hillcrest Avenue

The oldest house in the district and in State College is the John Krumrine homestead. Dating from 1852, it is located to the north of the 1915 Krumrine addition of land to College Heights. It is



a three-bay side-hall Georgian farmhouse with a hooded doorway, six-over-six windows and a standing seam metal roof. In excellent condition, it

still retains its integrity as an early central Pennsylvania farm property. The Henry Hartswick farmstead, located near the corner of Jackson Street and Adams Avenue, was razed in the 1960s.

*Where two farm properties abutted, Hillcrest Avenue becomes Adams Avenue.*

### 37 219 Adams Avenue

The *Colebrook*, "with a quiet charm all its own," is the catalog name for this Sears, Roebuck & Co. house. In the backyard of this property is a black walnut tree more than 200 years old. More than 88 feet tall and with a spread of 80 feet, it is one of Centre County's most notable trees.

### 38 305 Adams Avenue

Contractor Albert Bartges was responsible for building a number of houses in College Heights in the 1930s including this brick Colonial Revival and the one next door. As was true of his fellow contractors, he sometimes teamed up with local architects and sometimes built Sears mail-order homes, including his own on East Hartswick.

### 39 40 705 & 711 McKee Street

Another well-known area contractor and businessman, O.W. Houts, physically connected the community with an earlier Penn State by making stones from the original Old Main available for reuse. When Old Main was rebuilt in 1929–1930, leftover stones (originally quarried at a site near what is now East College Avenue and Pugh Street) were used for five residential properties in the Borough, including these two on McKee Street.

**41 714 McKee Street**

Landscape architect Walter W. Trainer came to Penn State in 1930 as a faculty member and supervisor of campus landscape construction and maintenance. Under his direction, the main campus became a laboratory for comparison and evaluation of the methods of adapting plants to their full potential, and it also became one of the most beautiful campuses in the country. He was the architect for this, his own 1931 Colonial Revival house. Equally important was Trainer’s landscape plan, patterned after styles popular in the mid-19th century. The landscape is still intact.

**42 734 McKee Street**

This Sears, Roebuck & Co. house, the *Wellington*, was described by Sears as a bungalow “masterpiece”. On a sizeable lot, it offers a rich contrast to the more traditionally styled properties along the street.

For additional information:

**Houses By Mail**

Stevenson, Katherine Cole and H. Ward Jandl, Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, DC, 1986.

**The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture 1890–1930**

Gowans, Alan, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1986.

**A Field Guide to American Houses**

McAlester, Virginia and Lee, Alfred A. Knopf, NY, 1988.

The College Heights Historic Neighborhood brochure has been developed by the Historic Resources Commission, Borough of State College.

For additional copies or information about the walking tours, contact:

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*Sears, Roebuck Catalog of Houses, 1926 and 117 House Designs of the Twenties* published by The Athenaeum of Philadelphia and Dover Publications, Inc.

