

National Register of Historic Places  
College Heights Historic District  
State College, Centre County, PA  
Section 7

Present and Historic Physical Appearance

The College Heights Historical District identified herein is located at the northernmost part of the Borough of State College, Centre County, Pennsylvania. Built on a relatively level strip of land at the crest of a hill, the College Heights Historical District is adjacent to, and forms the northern edge of The Pennsylvania State University campus and its Ag Hill and Farmers High School Historic Districts (National Register). This District encompasses land and historic buildings associated with the early residential history of State College and represent its growth and architectural development as an emerging college town. There are 319 properties in the District; 278 of them are contributing resources and all but two, an elementary school and a service station are residential.

Architecturally these properties offer excellent examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century housing styles with a combination of well-built mail-order, pattern book, and architect-designed variations of Colonial and Tudor Revivals, Mission-style, Craftsman Bungalow, Prairie School, and International style. A few of the earliest are Vernacular Victorian and Queen Anne styles. Nearly all properties have wood frame structural systems.<sup>1</sup> Building material façades include stone, brick, wood, stucco, and shingle, sometimes in combination, with stone and brick being used most frequently. Workmanship is of overall high quality.

Although variations in architectural styles and materials offer interesting contrasts, the scale and proportions of these properties are similar enough to provide a unity and cohesiveness to the neighborhood. Forty-one properties (approximately 13-percent) have been identified as non-contributing. They are, for the most part in architectural harmony with their neighbors but too recently built to be considered contributors to the nomination.

The boundary of the College Heights District extends from Holmes Street at the eastern edge of the Borough, south and west along Park Avenue bordering the campus and golf course, and then to a boundary that includes portions of Ridge Avenue and Sunset Road, north to portions of Hillcrest Avenue, and across Atherton Street to include Woodland Drive and portions of Mitchell Avenue. Atherton Street (Business Route 322) divides the District into East and West College Heights (also called Old and New) in local parlance, but does not diminish the homogeneity or integrity of the historic suburban landscape.

Subdivision schemes within each of the three additions resulted in a variety of street systems, many with the typical Pennsylvania grid of streets and alleys. Shifts in alignment occurred where family farms abutted, such as at Allen Street where the Henry Hartswick and John Krumrine family farms met. (Ridge Avenue, crossing Allen Street from the west, jogs slightly and becomes Hartswick Avenue to the east of Allen Street; Hillcrest Avenue becomes Adams Avenue.) Other streets have been laid out

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<sup>1</sup> Sanborn Insurance Maps - Borough of State College – 1911, 1922, 1929.

diagonally across the grid and the 1930's Woodland Drive added a curvilinear element appropriate to the picturesque intent of many builders and owners.

Allen Street runs northwest through the District and was an early thoroughfare connecting the campus with Krumrine Station (located approximately where Allen and Atherton Streets now intersect, beyond the District to the north) prior to the railroad terminal being located west of campus.<sup>2</sup> Atherton Street, the region's main thoroughfare today, was initially known as "The Road to the Barrens" an area where Andrew Carnegie had developed a model iron town for his Pittsburgh steel operations.

The boundaries of the District are crisp on two sides. Park Avenue at the southern edge of College Heights abuts the Penn State campus east of Atherton Street and the University golf links (laid out in the early 1920's, now the White Course) west of Atherton Street. At the eastern edge of the District, the back alley of lots that front on Holmes Street face a broad expanse of open University agricultural land and experimental flower gardens on what was once the Mitchell Estate. The ragged north and west edge is determined by the ending date of the District's period of significance(1944.)

The College Heights Historical District incorporates three annexations (from neighboring College and Ferguson Townships) to the original boundaries of the Borough established in 1904.<sup>3</sup> The John Krumrine Addition (1915) involved a rectangular parcel of three long blocks bounded by Park Avenue, Sunset Road, Ridge Avenue and Allen Street; the Henry Hartswick Addition (1922) added some sixteen blocks on both sides of Atherton Street, and north to Adams Avenue; and a further acquisition from the Krumrine-Hartswick descendants extended the northern boundary of College Heights in 1931.<sup>4</sup>

Given the proximity to the campus, College Heights has from its beginnings been a popular residential area for Penn State faculty and staff members and their families. Students have lived in rooming houses, duplexes, and larger apartment buildings, particularly along East Park Avenue and North Allen Street closest to campus, but single-family homes have been the predominant housing stock along the attractive residential streets of College Heights.

These properties, set back in a consistent line on fairly spacious landscaped lots, are located along well-maintained tree-lined streets. In 1933, for example, Hartswick Addition deed transfers stipulated that dwellings were to be set back at least twenty feet, with each dwelling to cost at least \$5,000. The stipulation also included that there was to be eight feet of grass between pavement and curb, and shade trees were to be planted on the grass not less than twenty or more than forty feet apart.<sup>5</sup> Some individual properties also retain vestiges of earlier planting plans developed for them by professional landscape architects, often Penn State faculty members.

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<sup>2</sup> , State College Chamber of Commerce, *State College: The Ideal Residence Town and Home of The Pennsylvania State College*, September, 1925, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Annexation Map of State College, 1904-1954. *Centre Daily Times*, State College, PA, July 3, 1954.

<sup>4</sup> State College Chamber of Commerce, September 1925, p33.

<sup>5</sup> Centre County Deed Book, Vol. 147, pp. 117 and 187.

The oldest structure in the District is the John Krumrine homestead dating from 1852 (136 Hillcrest Avenue), located to the north of the 1915 Krumrine addition.<sup>6</sup> A three-bay side hall Georgian farmhouse, it has a hooded doorway, six-over-six windows and a standing seam metal roof. Although it has undergone some modernizing (a large shed roof rear addition), it is in excellent condition and 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 1960's. The only other 19<sup>th</sup>-century building in College Heights is a farmhouse and early faculty home, originally located on the Penn State campus, which was remodeled and moved to 140 Hartswick in 1918.<sup>7</sup>

Limited building on open farm lands in what would become College Heights began early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with fifteen houses in place by 1920.<sup>8</sup> They were located on streets closest to Penn State – Park Avenue, Burrowes Street, Ridge Avenue and Allen Street. The three earliest, Folk Victorians were built before 1910 and are located just east of the Krumrine farm (523 N. Allen Street, 113 and 123 East Park Avenue). In 1910, a Queen Anne was added (511 Burrowes Street). The remaining homes built throughout the decade are a combination of structures reminiscent of earlier styles in counterpoint to an increasingly popular preference for Dutch Colonials.

By 1929, sixty-nine more houses had been added in College Heights, with Craftsman Bungalows being a desired new choice.<sup>9</sup> Several of them are located along Hartswick and Park Avenues and on Holmes Street. They vary in design from a tiny one-story 700-square-foot hipped-roof Bungalow with clapboard siding and trellised front porch, built in 1920 (214 Hartswick Avenue), to a 2-1/2 story, double-dormered, 2,000-square-foot version built in 1923 (117 East Park Avenue).<sup>10</sup> The roof of this Bungalow extends over cobblestoned porch supports with cobblestones also used to face the first floor. The second floor is stucco; clapboard is used for the dormers. Also during the 1920's Prairie style Four Squares were built along with more elaborate Dutch Colonials. The Four Square at 326 West Ridge Avenue built in 1920 and its Dutch Colonial neighbor across the street at 329 West Ridge Avenue built in 1921 are good examples.

In 1924 and 1925, two particularly imposing Colonial Revival houses were built on West Park Avenue overlooking the University golf course with a view of the Tussey Mountains to the south, the homes were selected by two prominent Penn State faculty members, W. G. Chambers, Dean of the College of Education and W. P. Davey, Professor of Physics and Chemistry, one house is faced in brick and one in stone and both have over 3,000 square feet of living space. They represent the beginning of a collection of large well-designed period-style homes built by Penn State administrators and faculty members along West Park Avenue during the next decade.

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<sup>6</sup> Centre County Assessment Records, State College, 1975

<sup>7</sup> State College Historic Properties Survey, 1992-1993; Penn State Room, Pattee Library, University Park, PA.

<sup>8</sup> Centre County Assessment Records, State College, 1975.

<sup>9</sup> Sanborn Insurance Maps, Borough of State College, 1929.

<sup>10</sup> Centre County Assessment Records, State College, 1975

College Heights became a major State College residential area in the 1930's when another two hundred or so homes were built. Mail-order houses, especially those offered by Sears, became a popular choice for many homeowners. Examples of Picturesque Revivals, Cape Cods, and Dutch Colonial styles are sprinkled throughout the District.

At the same time, local architects, many of them Penn State faculty members, were designing and having built a sophisticated selection of mostly larger period homes in Georgian and Dutch Colonial styles, similarly scaled with two and one-half stories, accented doorways, fanlights, sidelights, and often side porches or sunrooms. Two examples, both designed by architect Clarence M. Bauchspies, are 722 Holmes Street and 629 Sunset Road.

Several large Tudor Revival homes also were built in the District. A representative example designed by Bauchspies, also on Sunset Road, has a steeply pitched roof, stone facing, half timbering, decorative chimneys, and casement windows. In contrast, a few College Heights residents preferred the simple lines of the International style, represented by 617 West Park Avenue which was designed by Paul Schweitzer, a Penn State professor of engineering research. These skillfully designed homes are located throughout the District but especially along Park and Ridge Avenues and Sunset Road in West College Heights and on Mitchell Avenue and Holmes and McKee Streets east of Atherton Street.

The College Heights School, now used for administrative purposes and the College Heights Service Station are the only non-residential buildings in the District. Both the elementary school, which is built on land donated by Adam Krumrine, and the neighborhood service station, also owned by the Krumrine family, have been contributors to the community for more than 50 years. When a new owner wanted to convert the service station into a 7/11 convenience store a few years ago, the residents of College Heights urged him to reconsider. The discussion resulted in the retention of the neighborhood service station, continuing the role it has played for many years.

Good design and overall high quality workmanship of the properties and their careful maintenance by past and current owners have kept the appearance of the College Heights neighborhood neat and well groomed. When alternations have been made, usually an addition to a structure, they have been done so that the original integrity of the building has not been damaged.

Beyond the edge of the District there is an equally fine mix of houses, many in the International Style designed by architects William Hajjar, Kenneth Heidrich, and others and built in the late 1940's, 1950's and 1960's and later. Examples of non-contributing resources within the District include a 1956 Hajjar designed property at 327 Arbor Way; one designed in 1955 by Kenneth Heidrich (510 Fairway Road); and Milton Osborne's home at 506 Sunset Road was built in 1950. On the southeast corner of Sunset Road and Ridge Avenue is an example of one of a few modestly styled 1960's ranch houses found in the older parts of College Heights that contrast with their more elaborately styled neighbors. There are no examples of greatly altered older buildings in the District.

While the integrity of the College Heights Historic District would seem to be safe from outside pressures, it is not without threats. Some traffic to communities north and west of the Borough cut through

onto residential North Allen Street in East College Heights (and sometimes onto smaller residential streets) in order to avoid the vehicle clutter of North Atherton Street. While neighboring Ferguson Township has considered this an alternate route, State College Borough officials and College Heights' residents have not. They have unsuccessfully opposed left turns from Atherton Street into the neighborhood at the township-borough line, but have restricted those turns within the Borough.

Another pressure on College Heights is the shift from owner-occupied properties to absentee ownership and student rentals along increasingly busy streets such as north Allen Street and Park Avenue. The Borough has attempted to control overcrowding in these rental properties and the resulting increase in vehicles and noise that often spills over and negatively impacts nearby neighborhoods. The challenge is to keep the residential quality of this portion of College Heights viable and to maintain this District as an outstanding example of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century residential architecture.

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Statement of Significance

The College Heights Historical District of State College, Centre County, is an example of suburban residential development associated with the beginnings of the Pennsylvania State University in 1855, and particularly with its growth and development from the 1890's to 1944. It is significant under *National Register Criterion A* in the areas of community planning and development and education, under *Criterion C* in the area of architecture. It is significant in the theme of community planning and development through the ways in which a set of interlocking landowners, developers and builders transformed furnace farms into housing for faculty and staff employed by Penn State. For example:

- (1) Subdivision schemes were consciously developed in College Heights along Garden Suburb lines. The College Heights Association was established in 1924 by property owners who promoted its desirability and healthfulness. Association members noted the District's beautiful setting—it's altitude and its nearness to the college woods and golf links—and offered a promise that it would become the garden spot of State College.<sup>11</sup> Street names such as Sunset Road and Fairway Road oriented north from the links and Park Avenue, Ridge Avenue, Arbor Way, and Woodland Drive used in this suburban District are suggestive of the garden/nature tone.
- (2) College Heights' residents took advantage of the growth and popularity of national mass-marketing institutions offering pattern book and mail order housing that coincided with the growth of Penn State and the State College community by selecting from a wide range of easily accessible housing choices which they modified and individualized to meet their needs and tastes.
- (3) A number of College Heights' home owners chose to be personally involved in the design of their residences, drawing upon the expertise of a wide range of Penn State engineering and architectural faculty members.

The District is significant in the theme of education not only because of its historical association with the founding, growth, and development of the college, but also because the role college personnel played in the development of College Heights and of the Borough. Much of the housing in College Heights was developed for and lived in by people associated with the University as staff members, faculty, or students. In addition, faculty members and administrators helped to write ordinances, served on the Borough's boards and commissions, and were actively involved in the establishment of the College Heights School.

Of particular are the roles played by landscape architects Arthur W. Cowell and Walter Trainer, and architect Clarence Bauchspies, all College Heights residents. Cowell laid out a portion of East College Heights and supervised the landscaping of the College Heights School. Trainer was responsible for the development of

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<sup>11</sup> *State College Times*, State College, PA, November 28, 1924.

Sunset Park, northwest of the District. Both carefully landscaped their own properties and shared their professional expertise with many of their neighbors contributing to the garden quality of the District. Bauchspies contributed to the fine architectural examples in College Heights with more than 15 handsomely designed homes.

The College Heights Historic District is also significant under *Criterion C* in the area of architecture. There is a remarkable intermingling of architect-designed houses by Bauchspies and other with pattern book designs and mail-order housing. This mix represented across several decades of growth, presents a sampler of late Victoria, early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and pre-World War II housing styles. A high level of integrity is sustained by strong efforts to retain streetscapes and plantings on block after block of subdivisions.

The College Heights Historic District is located on land that was originally part of Centre Furnace, the area's first iron making operation. Begun in 1792 and out of blast by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, its influence continued when in 1855, two-hundred acres of furnace company land was donated by ironmasters James Irvin and Moses Thompson to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Society to be used for a new Farmers High School.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, other portions of former Centre Furnace lands were acquired by local farmers. John and Frederick Krumrine and Henry Hartswick became the owners of lands that would become College Heights.<sup>13</sup>

The Farmers high School gained a new name, the Agricultural College of Pennsylvania, and land grant status in 1862. In 1874 it became the Pennsylvania State College.<sup>14</sup> The student population grew slowly at first – 110 in 1860; 209 in 1890; 433 by 1900. Five years later, it had doubled; another 5 years and it doubled again, totaling 1,662 by 1910; and by 1920 it had reached 3,200.<sup>15</sup> Ten years later the student enrollment had reached 6,521. Increases in resident population paralleled that student growth closely – totaling 6,225 in 1930, for a combined total of 12,746 – and the demand for housing became persistent.<sup>16</sup> A significant portion of that demand was met in subdivision to the south of campus where a range of shelter from tenements and boarding houses to apartments and duplexes, single-family houses and fraternities were built over several decades. These served students, townspeople in laboring, retail and profession occupations as well as college staff and faculty. It must be noted that student enrollment and building activities did decline sharply during World War II.

The College Heights Historic District stands in distinct contrast to the far larger but more varied Holmes-Foster/ Highland Historical District to the south of campus. Although containing some student

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<sup>12</sup> Sylvester K. Stevens and Philip S. Klein, *The Centre Furnace Story: A Return to Our Roots*, Centre County Historical Society, State College, PA, 1985, p. 50.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas H. Moore, Jr., *Town of State College, Pennsylvania* (Maps of Property Relationships as of 1860), October 22, 1941, Centre County Deed Book Records.

<sup>14</sup> Wayland Fuller Dunaway, *History of Pennsylvania State College*, Lancaster Press, Inc., Lancaster, PA 1946, p. 443.

<sup>15</sup> State College Chamber of Commerce, *State College: The Ideal Residence Town and Home of the Pennsylvania State College*, State College, PA, 1925, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> Vivian Doty Hench. *The History of State College, 1896-1946*. Centre Daily Times, State College, PA 1948, p. 45.

housing, the housing designs are almost exclusively 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They offer the middle range of house sizes, in contrast to the massive fraternities and smaller cottages in the Holmes-Foster/Highlands District. With a more consistent set of planting schemes on boulevards and in front yards to tie together houses and streetscapes, College Heights developed as a more exclusive middle-class suburban District in the Borough.

While most Pennsylvania communities had peaked and then receded in building activities by the late 1920's and 1930's, State College enjoyed the economic stability of a growing college town and was in its building heyday. Financially accessible middle-class houses were being built north of campus with local builders and contractors replicating plans taken from a wide variety of books, catalogs, and trade magazines. Prospective owners were able to select the homes of their dreams from pattern books and architect design—homes that would meet their architectural preferences and financial capabilities in styles ranging from small Craftsmen and Prairie-style Bungalows to picturesque period revivals. Skill carpenters, bricklayers, and stonemasons were kept busy meeting the needs of this continually growing college community.

In 1924, the College Heights Association was formed and was, “composed of those persons holding property in the so-called Park Avenue section north of the College campus.” According to the November 28, 1924 edition of the *State College Time*:<sup>17</sup>

*Improvements have been made in this fast growing section of town right along since its inception. The streets have improved, walks have been laid, telephone and electric light lines are now waiting for the prospective builder; shade trees have been planted, water pipes have been laid on all the principal streets; and best of all, beautiful houses have been erected. From the very first, people have recognized the desirability of this location. 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.*

Faculty member Arthur W. Cowell contributed to that garden spot as the first Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Penn State; he laid out a portion of East College Heights, named its streets, and by 1920 had built a Sears Dutch Colonial at 144 Ridge Avenue. This was one of the first Sears houses to be built in College Heights. He customized his mail-order home by lowering the windows so that his young children could see the gardens he had designed for the property.<sup>18</sup>

Dr. Cowell was also responsible for planning the gardens and grounds of other residential properties including the John Haugh house at 335 Arbor Way, as well as for the landscape design of the College Heights School. Land for the school was donated by Adam Krumrine and members of the

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<sup>17</sup> *State College Times*, State College, PA, November 28, 1924

\*Penn State's Hort Wood was located across Park Avenue from East College Heights bounded by Park Avenue, Allen Street, Shortlidge Road, and Curtin Road. A very small portion of the woods still remains as most has been replaced by campus buildings.

<sup>18</sup> State College Historical Property Survey, 1992-1993.

College Heights Association volunteered to do the landscaping under Cowell's direction.<sup>19</sup> After leaving Penn State, Dr. Cowell developed landscape designs for several locations including the state park at Washington Crossing and Harrisburg's Capitol grounds.<sup>20</sup>

P. Boyd Kapp, 1920 Penn State architectural engineering graduate and professor of engineering mechanics and his partner Henley Eden, also a Penn State graduate, designed the College Heights School. They also were responsible for the design of some fine College Heights residential properties. One of those properties, a 1931 English Tudor located at 525 West Park Avenue, was the home for many years of Hemingway scholar, Philip Young. With a high pitched cross-gable, it has a slate roof, white stucco over brick veneer, wall dormers extending through the cornice, casement windows, and half timbering over a gabled porch entryway. Kapp is also credited with the design of other College Heights properties including a brick-veneered Colonial Revival at 525 McKee Street which has dormers with pediments and sets of three double-hung windows on either side of a Georgian-style doorway. Across the street at 172 Hartwick Avenue is a Mission-style masonry veneer home with some of the windows trimmed with exposed brick and stone.

Perhaps the property Kapp is best known for is the John Haugh house at 333 Arbor Way. This home was designed with another partner, Dean Kennedy in 1935-1936. According to family history, Mrs. Haugh wanted a different house, one unlike any others that were being built at the time. With the help of an excellent contractor, John Henszey, local craftsmen used native materials of hand-hewn timbers, hammer worked stone, and thick irregular slate shingles to build a stone English Tudor. The stone came from the Sand Mountain area of nearby Bear Meadows.<sup>21</sup> It is a large house with two sets of tall double chimneys with chimney pots, a cross gable with leaded-glass window and other metal casement windows glazed in diagonal patterns, brick trim, and a pronounced stone entrance porch with a heavy wooden door and iron hardware. The landscape plan was designed by Arthur Cowell and is still fairly intact.<sup>22</sup>

Contractor John Henszey like the Haugh house so much that he had a similar one designed and began to build it for himself the following year. He not only built large houses such as this one in College heights and elsewhere in the Borough, but he was a principal builder of small mail-order houses as well as a major contractor for the mansion-size fraternities to the south of campus.

O. W. Houts, another well-known area contractor and businessman, directly connected the community and Penn State by making stones from Penn State's original Old Main available for reuse. Old Main was rebuilt in 1929-1930 and leftover stones (originally quarried at a site near what is now East

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<sup>19</sup> Jo Hays and Margaret Riley. The Public Schools of the State College Area: A History-1896-1940. 1983, p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> State College Historical Properties Survey.

<sup>21</sup> John Haugh Property, Historic Registration Project, Bellefonte, PA.

<sup>22</sup> Kim Ranshaw. *Historic Landscape Inventory and Assessment Study for the Borough of State College*, Pennsylvania State University Department of Geography, December 18, 1992.

College Avenue and Pugh Street) were used for five residential properties.<sup>23</sup> Among these were two Colonial Revival homes constructed side-by-side at 705 and 711 McKee Street in College Heights.

Penn State professor, Frederick C. Disque was responsible for the design of 4 fine fraternity buildings in State College. He also was the architect for residential properties include a Tudor Revival on the corner of Ridge Avenue and Burrowes Street (154 Ridge Avenue). 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. In or around 1930, Disque left Penn State to become a professor of architecture at the University of Virginia.

Landscape architect Walter W. Trainer came to Penn State in 1930 as a faculty member and supervisor of 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 his own 1931 Colonial Revival house in College Heights at 714 McKee Street.

Equally important was Trainer's landscape plan patterned after styles popular in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>24</sup> The landscape remains intact today. Like his predecessor Arthur Cowell, Trainer became involved in a College Heights community project; the establishment of Sunset Park beginning in 1941.<sup>25</sup> The park is less than a block from the District's northeastern corner but is separated from the District by homes constructed after the period of significance.

Clarence M. 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 14 properties in College Heights. His houses are grouped in several locations. One of his earlier efforts (1935) resulted in the designing of 4 small two-storey houses on East Park Avenue at the edge of the Borough, each borrowing classical details and each representing a different Colonial Revival style that Bauchspies defined as French, Dutch, Georgian and New England (311, 317, 323, and 327 East Park Avenue).<sup>26</sup>

The French example, faced with uncoursed stone, has an entry porch with pediment, a side ell, and wall-gabled dormers extending through the cornice. Next door, the Dutch Colonial revival has a coursed stone main floor façade with a central entrance, and a three-bay clapboard shed dormer from a gambrel roof. The Georgian Colonial (gambrel roof) and the New England Colonial (side gabled) both have side hall entrances, coursed stone façades, and dormer windows. Each has an elaborate entrance; the Georgian example has a portico with a curved underside and pilaster; the New England example's portico has a broken triangular pediment and pilasters.

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<sup>23</sup> State College Historic Properties Survey.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Trainer Property, Historic Registration Project, Bellefonte, PA

<sup>25</sup> *Centre Daily Times*. State College, PA. May 20, 1982.

<sup>26</sup> State College historic Properties Survey

Bauchspies also offered new homeowners a variety of fairly sizeable houses in more elaborate period styles. Three of them, within a half block of each other on Holmes Street, range from a hipped-roof brick Colonial Revival (625 Holmes Street) to a half-timbered stone English Tudor Revival (721 Holmes Street) to clapboard Colonial Revival with a side porch (722 Holmes Street).

Another grouping of three in West College Heights includes his own richly detailed English Tudor Brownstone at 608 Sunset Road, a simple but carefully balanced limestone 3-bay Georgian Revival with entrance porch and decorated doorway at 629 Sunset Road, and a Colonial Revival in brick with front bay window, wall dormers, pilasters, and an elaborate door with hooded pediment at 346 Ridge Avenue. Three more Bauchspies-designed houses are on Mitchell Street. The home located at 321 Mitchell Street is a hipped-roof stone 3-bay Georgian Revival with side-hall entrance, an eyebrow window in the slate roof, and a cooper hood over the door. He was the architect for Kappa Delta Rho, a handsome stone Tudor Revival structure in the fraternity district.

Engineering and other faculty members who possessed the skills required to draw up original plans and specify details were also quite active in designing their own homes during this period. In the 1930's, John W. Breneman, a professor of Engineering Mechanics, designed a Colonial Revival for himself at 615 N. Burrowes and an English Tudor Revival for a colleague at 235 West Ridge Avenue. Carl W. Wild, a professor of Landscape Architecture, designed his International-style home at 705 North Holmes Street in 1937; in 1938, Industrial Arts professor John Friese was the architect for his Tudor Revival at 426 West Ridge Avenue.<sup>27</sup>

Many houses built during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in State College, from 1908 until the start of World War II were not designed by local architects or engineers. Rather the residents were choosing house patterns from the Gordon-Van Tine Co., Aladdin Co., and Sears Roebuck & Co. in styles with names like *Westly*, *Rembrandt Attleboro*, *Lynnhaven*, *Mitchell*, or *Bedford*. They were ordered by mail and shipped by rail with materials delivered by train to the receiving station of the Bellefonte Central a few blocks west of campus. These mail order companies offered would-be home owners not only the latest in style choices to meet their space needs and their pocketbooks, but total house packages with first-rate materials. The Aladdin Company, with an "Aladdin Man" staying at the nearby Bellefonte YMCA, advertised that their houses could be built at half the cost of buildings put up by the usual methods.<sup>28</sup> All building parts arrived by railroad, precut and numbered and, in the case of Sears, a mortgage plan was provided to help owners acquire their new homes along with a guarantee that promised satisfaction or Sears would pay all shipping costs and refund the purchase price. Once the lot was selected and the foundation ready, these homes were ready for assembly by local builders or possibly even by the purchasers themselves. Materials were carried on the Bellefonte Central from a variety of places including Newark, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Detroit—wherever the factory suppliers were located.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> State College Historic Properties Survey (Committee Research).

<sup>28</sup> *State College Times*, State College, PA., April 8, 1922, p. 8

<sup>29</sup> John Henszey Records, Private Collection

While the earliest mail-order buyers chose to build vernacular Victorian houses in the areas immediately adjacent to campus, by the 1920's catalogs were providing prospective homeowners with a variety of alternative plans. Some buyers agreed with the Gordon-Van Tine Catalog that, "*There is nothing that answers your purpose so well, if room is required, as the big square house*" and chose a popular Four Square.<sup>30</sup> Good examples of these substantial 2-story houses with low pyramidal roofs, dormers, and verandahs running the full width of the first floor can be found at 326 West Ridge Avenue (1920), 243 West Park Avenue (1925), and 210 Hartswick Avenue (1929).

Others preferred to choose from a variety of large and small Bungalow styles. One family selected a 1922 two-story 8 room Gordon-Van Tine, No. 615, described as "...a charming English Half-Timbered Design."<sup>31</sup> The original stucco and half-timbered trim has been covered with permastone, but this house at 217 West Park Avenue, is still easily identified as No. 615, and is still owned by the Knutson/DeLauter family who had it built. If a buyer did not need such a large home, the four-room Sears' *Rosita* at 214 Hartswick Avenue was available for less than \$1,000.00.<sup>32</sup>

With interest in the new Craftsman style, many College Heights homeowners chose Bungalows with sloping roofs extending over large porches with heavy porch supports. A variation of the Sears *Westly* with a shed dormer, seven rooms and bath and a full-width front porch, was popular throughout the Borough. Two College Heights' examples are at 143 West Park Avenue and 520 Holmes Street. A similar style, the *Carlin*, with an open dormer onto a second floor balcony, probably was the choice of the Garner family at 706 North Allen Street. The front porch has been enclosed, but suggestions of the balcony remain.

Dutch Colonials were providing yet another stylish housing cut. Landscape architect Arthur Cowell's home on Ridge Avenue has a gambrel roof with two pairs of double-hung windows in the shed-roofed dormer, along with two pairs of window on either side of the pediment-porch entryway. The façade materials are wooden shingles. Another 1922 variation at 215 Ridge Avenue has a grouping of four windows with a hooded main entrance to the side and single windows in the shed dormer.

By the early 1930's, 1-1/2 to 2-story Romantic Revival styles provided by mail-order companies also were in high demand. These frame houses sometimes faced in clapboard, sometimes brick, and sometimes stone, were repeated throughout the College Heights residential District, providing architectural variety and individuality to the neighborhood.

Three houses at the corner of Mitchell Avenue and Holmes Street offer good examples of the versatility of these mail-order offerings. They all were selected by Penn State faculty families in 1932/33. The David Ranks chose a stone English cottage, the *Colchester*, a "...home of outstanding beauty" according to the Sears Roebuck catalog, with a crescent window over a set of triple windows in the front

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<sup>30</sup> Gordon-Van Tine Co., *117 House Designs of the Twenties*. The Athenaeum of Philadelphia and Dover Publications, Inc., New York, p. 81.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>32</sup> Katherine C. Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl. Houses by Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears Roebuck & Co. Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D. C. 1986, p 254.

gable, a round-arched front door, and a distinctive chimney to the right of the doorway (750 Holmes Street).<sup>33</sup> Across the street at 433 Mitchell Avenue, the George Guilletts chose another Tudor cottage-style stone Sears (the pattern name is not available) with a main cross-gable and a smaller gable acting as the entrance, metal casement windows, and slate roof. As was possible with Sears plans, Dr. Guilletts, a professor of Mechanical Engineering, chose to customize his home with higher ceilings and a rounded main staircase.<sup>34</sup> On the opposite corner, the Maurice Gjesdahls chose the *Attleboro*, a two-story Cape Cod that, according to Sears, "...achieves distinction with its fine doorway, dormers, shuttered windows and correct architectural details." This house at 747 Holmes Street was featured in a National Trust publication entitled, *Houses by Mail*.<sup>35</sup>

Other Sears English cottage-style examples, *The Mitchell*, *the Barrington*, and *The Claremont*, can be found in College Heights along with *The Lynnhaven* described in the Sears catalog as, "...a cheerful well-proportioned residence with deep set door and flower boxes."<sup>36</sup> It was a popular State College choice as three of these Tudor-style cottages are located within a few blocks of each other on Sunset Road, Ridge and Park Avenues. One of them, with the addition of a porte-cochere, was the home of Dr. Mary Willard, a noted criminologist and the daughter of Professor Joseph Willard. The Willard Building on the Penn State campus recognizes his prominence in the community.

Contractor Albert Bartges was responsible for building a number of homes in College Heights including his own 3-bay brick veneer Colonial Revival at 320 Hartswick Avenue in 1932. It is architecturally well-proportioned with a central porch entrance that is enhanced by a columned portico and doorway with fanlight and sidelights. It too is a Sears house.<sup>37</sup>

Well built with good materials and good designs, these mail-order houses often compare favorably with homes designed by local architects and are not always easy to identify. Information about them has come from several sources. In some cases, homeowners have shared copies of original plans. Houses also have been identified by matching them to styles and plans offered through Sears and other catalogs. Construction details found in the former office of contractor John Henszey has been another rich source of information. Court records have also identified the name of at least one of the Sears lending officers, F. C. Schaub of Philadelphia and to whom such loans were made.<sup>38</sup>

College Heights offers an excellent example of an academic community that has both the interest in and the financial means to experiment with housing ideas and trends. With a cadre of architects, landscape architects, and engineers eager to experiment with built versions of theoretical designs and with local builders encouraged to replicate plans from books, catalogs, and trade magazines, State College clients created the climate for making an evolving suburban landscape of academic quality in

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p 101.

<sup>34</sup> State College Historic Properties Survey.

<sup>35</sup> Stevenson & Jandl, p 254.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>37</sup> Centre County Mortgagee Files, August 15, 1932-September 25, 1934.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

College Heights. With owner interest still high, this State College neighborhood has remained remarkably intact. It represents a laboratory of examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century suburban architecture and one worthy of recognition.

Architects/Builders  
Clarence Bauchspies, Architect  
Albert Bartges, Builder  
Boyd Kapp, Architect  
Dean Kennedy, Architect  
John Henszey, Builder