

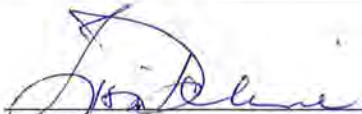
The University Club
Name of Property

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

12/2/19
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th REVIVALS: Georgian Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Stone

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The University Club building is located at 105 Fir Hill on the campus of the University of Akron, in the city of Akron, Summit County. The 1917-19 three-story brick Georgian Revival style building with stone trim is fireproof reinforced concrete construction designed by the Akron architectural and engineering firm of Harpster & Bliss.¹ (Photo 1, Historic Images, Figures 4-7) A brick 1941 handball/squash court and 1952-53 two-story banquet addition are located at the rear northeast corner of the building.² A rear 1988-89 two-story rectangular plan brick addition was added to the southeast corner, along with an ADA ramp, three-story stair and elevator tower, and one-story concrete block mechanical room addition to the north.³ (See Additional Documentation-Location & Property Development) The building is on the east side of Fir Hill, which connects with East Buchtel Avenue and State Route 8 to the east. Parking areas separate the building from an 11-story 1965 brick apartment complex to the north, 1953 brick church to the south, and State Route 8 to the east. A semi-circular driveway leads from Fir Hill to the front of the building with adjacent surface parking lots to the north, south and east. The building is set back by a sloped grass lawn from the tree-lined city street with sidewalk. Mature trees are scattered on the property with small landscaped trees and bushes along the façade and secondary elevations. A metal gated and paved terrace is situated at the rear of the building. A stacked stone retaining wall wraps the north and rear east perimeter at parking lots and along north circular driveway entry to accommodate the change in topography sloping from south to north and east to west.

¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1940, 1950; *Plain Dealer* 24 August 1917; Akron Historic Landmark Survey, OHI SUM-369-16, University Club, August 1978.

² Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Directors of the Akron University Club Company, 15 July 1941, 16 October 1952. University Club Collection. Available at The University of Akron Archives; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1940, 1950.

³ Summit County Parcel #6756811, Building Card; Request for Proposal for Highest and Best Use to Repurpose the Paul E. Martin Center. Attachment 3-Building History/Data/Description. The University of Akron, 19 November 2014.

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Narrative Description (Photos 1-17) (Historic Images, Figures 4-8)

The 1917-19 three-story red haystack textured brick Georgian Revival style building with stone trim is fireproof reinforced concrete construction designed by the Akron architectural and engineering firm of Harpster & Bliss. The symmetrical nine-bay façade is composed of central two-story three-bay portico supported by paired classical stone Greek Corinthian columns and balustrade, flanked by three-bay wings. (Photos 1, 2, Historic Images, Figures 4-7) A Juliette balcony with wrought iron railing rests on stone brackets above a central paired door entry with leaded glass fanlight. (Photos 3, 4) The portico is topped at the third floor by an open porch enclosed by stone and wrought iron rail. Arched replacement 8/8 double-hung windows with transom and entry are accented with quoined stone surrounds at the first floor with stone water table. Paired replacement 6/1 double-hung windows with stone sills and lintels with square decorative motif compose second floor bays. The third floor with single double hung windows is separated by a dentilled stone cornice with stylized rosette motif at the portico, continuing to side elevations. The raised stone parapet above the carved stone cornice features a balustrade at the portico and blind panels throughout. A concrete ADA ramp with metal railing spans the north bay, wrapping the north elevation, leading to the 1988-89 three-story stair and elevator tower.

A 1988-89 two-story brick stair and elevator tower with glass door entry and stone lintel is set back at the north elevation, connecting to stairs and concrete ADA ramp wrapping from the facade. (Photo 5) The tower is adjacent to a 1941 brick flat roof handball/squash court addition with stone belt courses at the rear northeast corner, and 1988-89 concrete block one-story mechanical room with dock projecting to the north. A fabric awning covered entry is situated along the west wall. Stairs with brick sidewall along the rear east wall lead to entry at the second floor.

The south elevation 1917-19 building portion mimics the façade with variation in window fenestration at the stair corridor and first floor restroom. A porte cochere at the south entrance, evidenced in historic images and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, was removed by 1970, and at first was replaced with a fabric barrel awning. (Photos 6, 7) (Historic Images 4-6) Stone stairs with brick sidewalls lead to the remaining projecting south entry with hipped standing metal seam roof and paired door entry with leaded glass transom between infilled arched windows with ventilation fans at the first floor. (Photo 7) A red brick 1988-89 two-story three-bay rectangular plan flat roof addition with raised basement, stone water table and parapet is connected to the rear. (Photo 8) Symmetrical window bays are composed of basement and first floor paired 8/8 double windows, and 8-pane transoms at the first floor.

The rear east elevation is composed of central 1917-19 gable roof portion housing the ballroom/meeting space on the first floor, with attached 1952-53 banquet addition to the north and rear two-story 1988-89 south addition with three bays of 8/8/8 windows. A central hipped standing seam roof entry supported by round columns with brick sidewalls and stairs leads from the rear terrace to the basement restaurant. (Photos 8-10)

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First-floor interior features include pink marble floors, wainscot, and stairs, wallpaper covered walls, and wood beamed ceiling with scrolled brackets in the 1917-1919 lobby. (Photo 11, 12) Arched doorways with divided fanlights and paired panel doors with historic baseboards and trim separate the lobby from adjoining club spaces including north library with arched windows and divided fanlights and fireplace mantel (Photos 13, 14) and east ballroom/meeting space with both dance floor and carpeting, wallpaper covered walls with wood panel wainscot, and wood beamed ceiling with scrolled brackets and fireplace mantel. (Photos 15-17) The first floor was remodeled in 1978 (Historic Images, Figure 8) and in the 1980s⁴ with contemporary tile floors, acoustical tile ceilings, recessed canned lighting, and brass chandeliers. The basement housed a kitchen, restaurant, and bar with red tile floor, wallpaper walls, timber wood wainscot, acoustical tile drop ceiling, and booth seating. The second and third floors housed guest sleeping rooms which were further divided under University of Akron ownership for offices from the 1980s through the 2000s. Offices retain remnants of historic trim and baseboard.

INTEGRITY

The red brick Georgian Revival style University Club building retains historic integrity. Historic architectural integrity of design, materials, and workmanship is demonstrated through the retention of historic architectural elements, fabric, materials, and craftsmanship representative of the Georgian Revival style. These include rectangular massing, façade symmetry with three bay wings flanking the central three-bay columned portico, raised basement with water table, stone belt course, balustrade at parapet, multipaned arched windows with stone lintels, central paired door entry with leaded glass fanlight, and quoining at window and door surrounds. Additional classical details include a bracketed stone Juliette balcony with wrought iron railing above the central entry, stylized rosette motif at the dentilled portico cornice, and square decorative motif at window lintels. Interior features include pink marble floors and wainscot, arched doorways and windows with divided fanlights, painted wood beamed ceilings with scrolled brackets, and fireplace mantels. First floor lobby, ballroom and living room-library convey designated areas for club uses including reception, entertainment and meeting space. Upper floor sleeping rooms were converted for office use outside the period of significance.

The building is in good condition demonstrating little deterioration and minor modifications, retaining a significant level of historic architectural integrity. The building remains in its historic location and the architectural language retains the historic feeling and association as noted in historic images of the building in its original historic setting.

⁴ *The Buchtelite*, University of Akron, February 1978. The University of Akron Archives, The University of Akron, Ohio, 5; Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Buildings and Grounds Committee University Club of Akron, 2 June 1983; Summit County Parcel #6756811, Building Card; Request for Proposal for Highest and Best Use to Repurpose the Paul E. Martin Center. Attachment 3-Building History/Data/Description. The University of Akron, 19 November 2014.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION
SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1917-1970

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Harpster & Bliss
Firestone, Roy G.
McCord, George E. Jr.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The 1917-1919 University Club building is nominated under Criterion A in the area of Social History, Entertainment and Recreation serving as a university men's social and recreational gathering place for Akron's elite requiring a minimum of two years of college for membership. The club reached its greatest popularity at the height of the rubber industry during the first part of the 20th century, continuing to the 1960s and declining in the 1970s. In addition, the building is significant under Criterion C: Architecture as an excellent example of the Georgian Revival style club architecture designed by prominent Akron architects and engineers Harpster & Bliss.

The period of significance begins in 1917 with the beginning of construction of the University Club building and continues to 1970 when the club's cultural dynamic changed along with a decline in membership as Akron industry slumped with the exodus of the rubber industry executives. In addition, the emergence of Civil Rights activism protesting inequality and injustice through the Peace, Environmental and Women's Rights movements created an often adversarial and volatile climate, along with a change in social norms with rebellion against authority becoming key themes of the 1970s as Americans sought individualism through new outlooks on religion, popular culture, and sexuality diminishing the role of the traditional university men's social club.

Narrative Summary

The University Club of Akron was founded as a social, cultural, and educational men's club requiring college attendance with the membership roster reflecting the success of the rubber industry in Akron. Ohio had emerged as an industry leader of rubber production in the United States in the late nineteenth century. Akron became known as the "Rubber Capital of the World" with numerous large-scale rubber producing companies headquartered in or near the city including The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company (NR #14000030 (Hall)/13000683 (HQ)), The B.F. Goodrich Company, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company (NR ##14000338), and General Tire Company. The advent of the bicycle followed by automobiles becoming the preferred form of transportation allowed these companies to experience tremendous growth and wealth. Between 1910 and 1920, the population of Akron grew from 69,067 to 208,435 people reflecting 201.8% in growth, making it the fastest growing city the country. Prominent Akron families included F.A. and his brother C.W. Seiberling who in 1898 co-founded The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, and whose homes — Stan Hywet Hall - Frank A. Seiberling House, 714 N. Portage Pass (NR #75002058) and Charles Willard Seiberling House, 1075 W. Market Street (NR #93000405) — are listed on the National Register. The Seiberlings were integral to the founding of The University Club which allowed for professional networking, social discourse, dining and athletic facilities, as well as a residence for young professionals. Intertwined with the growth of Akron, the roster of members grew to include the Who's Who of the international rubber community.⁵

In 1950, more than 130 different companies manufactured rubber in Ohio employing more than 85,000 workers, producing more than one-third of the tires and approximately 30% of all other

⁵ *Plain Dealer*, 24 August 1917; U.S. Federal Population Census, 1910; University of Akron Martin Center, History. AIA Akron. Available at <http://aiaakron.org/2013/03/20122013-design-awards-program-2/>.

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rubber products used in the United States. By the late twentieth century, the rubber industry began to decline in Ohio. While several companies continued to have their corporate offices in the state, many production facilities moved to other parts of the country with Akron firms only producing a small percentage of tires in the United States, nowhere near the figures of the 1950s. This decline was reflected in the demise of the University Club in the 1970s and the final closing of the club in 1987.⁶

Criterion A

History of University Clubs

The traditional men's private social club originated in London during the eighteenth century as a successor to the coffeehouse and is seen as distinct from Masonic organizations. Coffee was introduced to London society in 1652 with coffeehouses becoming a popular place to meet and discuss current events. Some took on distinct political affiliations and in a move to limit who could partake in the conversations – instituted a members-only policy. Coffeehouses were exported to New York and began to dominate the social scene. The private social club was adapted in the United States with the five oldest clubs including the South River Club, MD (1742); the Schuylkill Fishing Company, Andalusia, PA (1732); the Old Colony Club, Plymouth, MA (1769); the Philadelphia Club, PA (1834); and, the Union Club of the City of New York, NY (1836).⁷

A wave of university based men's social clubs in New York began in the 1860s such as Harvard (1865) with the Neo-Georgian Revival style 1894 Harvard Club building at 27-29 West 44th Street designed by Charles McKim (NR#80002693); Princeton (1866) with the Princeton Club which moved among four different buildings until settling at their current clubhouse in 1963 at 15 West 43rd Street; and the more wide ranging University Club of New York (1865) many of whom were Yale alumni, with the Italian Renaissance Revival style 1899 University Club building at 1 West 54th Street designed by McKim, Mead & White. (NR# 80002726). McKim, Mead & White's examples showing the use of classically-derived architectural influences either in forms recalling America's colonial past or Italian Renaissance models set the architectural character associated with such clubs and evoked images of longevity, stability, and exclusivity.

The university club concept spread to Ohio and included the University Club of Cincinnati and the University Club of Cleveland. The University Club of Cincinnati was established in 1879 by a generalized call through the daily newspapers for persons interested in forming a club of "college

⁶ "Rubber Industry." *Ohio History Central*. Available at http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Rubber_Industry; U.S. Federal Population Census, 1910, 1920.

⁷ Ward, Inna. *Whitaker's Almanack 2008*. London: A&C Black, 2008. Nevlus, James "The Rise and Fall of New York City's Private Social Clubs," *Curbed New York*. 17 June 2015. Available at <https://ny.curbed.com/2015/6/17/9950758/the-rise-and-fall-of-new-york-citys-private-social-clubs>; Gilbreath, Edward M., "Oldest social club survives without water or electricity" *The Post and Courier* 24 August 2017; Pirro, J.F. "The (Somewhat) Secret History of the Oldest Social Club in America" *Main Line Today* Available at <http://www.mainlinetoday.com/Main-Line-Today/September-2016/The-Somewhat-Secret-History-of-the-Oldest-Social-Club-in-America/>; The Old Colony Club. *The Founding of the Club*. Available at <http://www.oldcolonyclub.org/>.

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men.” The club lasted until 1896. In 1905, the local alumni of Harvard, Yale and Princeton colleges held a joint outing to re-establish the University Club, re-opening it in 1907 in the Second Empire style William Wallace Seely House at 401 E 4th Street and later expanding into the Snowden Smith House. The club remains in operation.⁸ The University Club of Cleveland was founded in 1898 with a membership of 140 men representing 40 different colleges and universities, with its first clubhouse located at the John Tod House, 692 Prospect Avenue. As membership increased, the club purchased the Stager-Beckwith House, 3813 Euclid Avenue (NR#78002042) which became the clubhouse in 1913. The house was a permanent residence to many men as well as a setting for a variety of social, intellectual and athletic activities. Club athletic competitions were often held against The University Club of Akron. The Cleveland club closed in 2002.⁹

Akron appears to have had two prominent men’s social clubs including The University Club of Akron designed by Harpster & Bliss, the subject of this nomination, and The Akron City Club (1915-2003) located downtown in the 1916 Ohio Building, 171-189 S. Main Street (South Main Street HD NR# 08000622).¹⁰ The Ohio Building was designed for O’Neil’s Department Store owner and co-founder of General Tire and Rubber Michael O’Neil by Fred Harpster of Harpster & Bliss. The top three floors of the eight-story office building were designed to house the club, which resided in the building from 1916 to 1981. In 1916, the club had 400 prominent businesses and professional members. Some of most influential members included Harvey S. Firestone, local department store owners, Michael O’Neil and Abraham Polsky, and F. A. Seiberling. Downtown club facilities included a banquet hall, ladies’ private dining room, grill, kitchen and lounging areas, gymnasium, three bowling alleys, two handball courts, billiards, exercise equipment and showers, and gym/ballroom. The top eighth floor served as a dormitory with 25 bedrooms with fireplaces, wooden desks and leather furniture. In 1981 the club relocated to the top floor of the Murdoch Building, 50 South Main Street and later became insolvent. The building has been converted for use as the Office of the Summit County Executive and houses the county administrative offices.

The University Club of Akron - Founding Years

With the City of Akron and the rubber industry thriving, the University Club of Akron was founded in 1909 by a group of young college graduates distinguishing themselves as a University Club by requiring college attendance as a prerequisite for membership. Early members leased the John F. Seiberling House, 158 East Market Street, Akron (demolished) to use as their meeting place. The social, cultural, athletic and educational club was open exclusively to men with at least two years of college.¹¹

The first club president (1909-1910) was Richard W. Brouse, age 20 years, a recent graduate of Kenyon College employed as a chemist at The B.F. Goodrich Company. He was followed by: Harold W. French (1910-11), agent for New York Commercial Co. and Geo. A. Alden & Co. crude rubber importers; Charles B. Raymond (1911-12) secretary of The B.F. Goodrich Company; F.A.

⁸ University Club of Cincinnati. History. Available at <http://www.uclubcincinnati.com/>.

⁹ Van Tassel, David R. and Grabowski, John J. eds. “University Club,” *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. Also available at www.ech.case.edu.

¹⁰ Akron City Directory, Clubs, 1922. Available at *Ancestry.com*.

¹¹ *Plain Dealer*, 24 August 1917; U.S. Federal Population Census, 1910; University of Akron Martin Center, History. AIA Akron. Available at <http://aiaakron.org/2013/03/20122013-design-awards-program-2/>.

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Seiberling (1912-13), president and general manager of The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company; William H. Eager (1913-14), treasurer and sales manager for The Whitman & Barnes Manufacturing Co. (twist drills and reamers); Paul W. Litchfield (1914-15), factory manager and later president of The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company; Guy E. Norwood (1915-16) assistant treasurer and secretary for The B.F. Goodrich Company; and, C.W. Seiberling (1916-18) vice president of The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company.¹² (Historic Images, Figure 9)

By 1917, the club had grown considerably to a membership of 435 men.¹³ Under the leadership of President Charles W. Seiberling, building committee chair and past president, William H. Eager, launched a \$135,000 building campaign with successful completion announced at a “smoker” with 200 members present on February 11, 1917.¹⁴ Articles of Incorporation for “The Akron University Club Company” were filed shortly thereafter on February 14, 1917¹⁵ stating the purpose of,

“conducting and carrying on a club or organization, the active membership of which shall be confined to persons who have been duly registered and enrolled in and have actually attended for such a period as may be fixed by the Bylaws of the Company and have been in good standing therein, a college or university of recognized standing empowered or authorized to confer degrees in Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, or Professional Degrees such as Bachelor of Law, Doctor of Medicine and other similar degrees and whose curriculum shall be approved by the Board of directors or such other officers of the corporation...The corporation shall in order to carry out its various objects and purposes be empowered to acquire by lease, purchase or otherwise, real estate and to construct thereon a building or buildings suitable for the purposes and objects of the club.... The capital stock of such corporation shall be One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000)...”

By-laws elaborated on the purpose and establishing the name stating;

“This corporation is a social Club, organized in addition to the provisions contained in the charter, for the purpose of promoting social intercourse, cultural and intellectual improvement, and for providing means of entertainment, amusement, recreation, enjoyment and pastime for its members and their guests, under the name of The Akron University Club Co. It shall be known as ‘The University Club’ except for purposes of business, as required by law.”¹⁶

Incorporators of the newly formed company were listed as: Charles W. Seiberling; Francis Seiberling, partner with the Akron law firm of Slabaugh, Seiberling & Huber; William E. Young, partner with the Akron law firm of Allen, Waters, Young & Andress; William H. Eager, Treasurer of

¹² Akron City Directory, 1909-17; U.S. Population Census, 1910; U.S. School Yearbooks, 1900--1990. Available at *Ancestry.com*.

¹³ *Plain Dealer*, 24 August 1917.

¹⁴ *Plain Dealer*, 12 February 1917

¹⁵ These Articles of Incorporation of the Akron University Club Company, 14 February 1917. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

¹⁶ By-laws and Regulations. The Akron University Club Company. Article I. Name. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

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Whiteman & Barnes Manufacturing Co., Akron; and, Aaron W. Burnett, President of The Bankers Guarantee Title & Trust Co., The Burnett Building Co., and Ridgewood Realty Co.¹⁷

With a successful fund-raising campaign completed, the club immediately embarked upon construction of the Georgian Revival style clubhouse on Fir Street in 1917, designed by the firm of Harpster & Bliss.¹⁸ (Historic Images, Figure 1,4) The lower two floors of the club were to be used for social activities with a living room, card room, reading room and lobby, basement billiard room, upper floor sleeping accommodations for 55 men, and dining hall providing capacity for 400 members.¹⁹ (Historic Images, Figure 1)

World War I was a boon to the rubber industry, but impacted club membership. With the new building program underway in 1917, 50 of the 435 members enlisted or were commissioned for World War I military service serving at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Lawrence Township, Indiana, and Battery B, offering their services as engineers or called to active duty from reserve lists as medical men and line officers. To meet the sudden decline in membership, the Board of Directors opened membership to 100 additional men including those on the waiting lists.²⁰ Completion of the club building may have been delayed until after the War, reflected by a building date of 1919 on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.²¹ The Bylaws stated:

“any man who was in college or university of recognized standing on the date of the declaration of a state of war by the United States upon Germany in April 1917, and who had pursued the studies leading to a degree for more than two and one-half years at that time, and who subsequently left in good collegiate standing to enter the service of the United States Army or Navy, and who continued in service in good standing until the date upon which he would have otherwise have received his degree, may be eligible for membership in the club as if he had secured his degree.”²²

The Twenties

In 1922, the club reported a total of 538 resident members and 155 non-resident members, defined as any member enrolled as a student outside of Summit County.²³ A full schedule of activities was reported by the Entertainment Committee which was charged with being self-supporting, relying on wholesale prices for decorations from local downtown stores and “adhering strictly to local talent for our music.” The Committee reported conducting seven dinner dances, six formal dances, two dances and swimming parties at Summit Beach Park, and a New Year’s Eve party at Firestone Club House, likely arranged by Entertainment Committee member Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. “Stag affairs”

¹⁷ Akron City Directory, 1917. Available at *Ancestry.com*

¹⁸ *Plain Dealer*, 24 August 1917; University of Akron Martin Center, History. AIA Akron. Available at <http://aiaakron.org/2013/03/20122013-design-awards-program-2/> .

¹⁹ *Plain Dealer*, 24 August 1917.

²⁰ *Plain Dealer*, 24 August 1917. University of Akron Martin Center, History. AIA Akron. Available at <http://aiaakron.org/2013/03/20122013-design-awards-program-2/>

²¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1940,1950.

²² By-laws and Regulations. The Akron University Club Company. Article VIII. Classification of Members, 17 April 1920.

²³ By-laws and Regulations. The Akron University Club Company. Article VIII Classification of Members.

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included three informal smokers, one stag dinner, and one smoker “during which Cleveland talent of the dancing and singing variety was in evidence.” Furtherance of informal smokers was recommended for future events “wherein the instrumental and vocal talent of our members can be developed and enjoyed and a repetition of the congenial times last winter when card games [bridge in particular] were in vogue, not only in the card room, but the reading room, lobby and in fact, occupying the Club’s entire first floor.” Sixty-two teams entered the bridge tournament which ran through November and December. In addition, a New Year’s Day open house was held at the club with an orchestra providing music. The Sports Committee held the Annual Outing at Turkeyfoot Lake with numerous events of competitive sports. “[P]lay-by-play foot-ball returns by private wire, covering four of the most important foot-ball games of last fall” were conducted making ticker service available for one Big Ten Conference college game every Saturday, charting it on the blackboard in the living room.²⁴ Member benefits were arranged with Buckeye Cycle to grant members special discounts on all tennis and baseball goods. Additional events included “a baseball game between the married and single men at Goodyear field.” An Annual club championship tennis tournament was conducted on the club tennis courts. The tennis team travelled to play the Cleveland University Club and attended the International Davis Cup Tennis Tournament in Cleveland. The committee also put together an annual city tennis championship allowing the best players in the city to compete on the club courts. Winter baseball games were played in the Goodyear gym.²⁵

The Show Committee worked for a year to write, score, produce, and direct the production of “Put and Take” which was successfully presented as two matinee performances at the Goodyear Theater in April 1922.²⁶

In 1923, annual dues for resident club members were \$50.00 [\$739.11 in 2019] and \$10.00 [\$147.82 in 2019] for nonresident members, with the Common Capital Stock of the company increased from \$50,000 to \$100,000 divided into 2000 shares at \$25.00 each.²⁷ Members out of college less than two years were required to purchase one share of common stock, and those out two years and over two shares common stock due at the time of application.²⁸ The 1922 Balance Sheet showed real estate, furniture, and fixtures valued at \$160,297.13 with total assets of \$175,685.03.²⁹

From club shows and dances to tennis tournaments and educational programs, the club thrived. By 1925, use of the club shifted away from its major function as an attractive residence serving as a post-graduate dormitory for men newly out of college and starting their careers in Akron industries. Married university graduates and their families became the focus. The club reported 12 vacant beds

²⁴ Report of the Entertainment Committee of The Akron University Club Company for the Fiscal Year April 1, 1921-April 1, 1922. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

²⁵ Annual Report of the Sports Committee for 1921-22. The Akron University Club Company. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

²⁶ Report of the Show Committee of the Akron University Club, 28 April 1922. The Akron University Club Company. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

²⁷ By-laws and Regulations. The Akron University Club Company. Article IX, Section 5, 28 April 1923.

²⁸ By-laws and Regulations. The Akron University Club Company. Article VIII, Section 6, 10 May 1924; CPI Inflation Calculator. Available at <https://www.officialdata.org/1815-dollars-in-2019>.

²⁹ General Balance Sheet, 28 February 1922. The Akron University Club Company. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

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out of a total of 55 and a consequent loss in room and restaurant revenue. A new policy was employed charging each person living in the clubhouse \$25.00 to a monthly house account to compel support of the restaurant service. Room rental charges were raised to add \$20.00 monthly to the club income.³⁰

Depression through Post-World War II

The City of Akron remained stable through the Depression years of the 1930s. World War II wartime production was viewed as a patriotic response by industry in the name of national service and expansion to accommodate war production needs. In a call to Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company employees, president Paul W. Litchfield advised employees about the role industry must play, "In this critical period, every man is called into the country's service, whether he is in uniform, in overalls, or wherever needed. Industry must forget its own interest; subordinate everything else to the national interest."³¹ The University Club Honor Roll of men in service was posted. (Historic Images, Figure 10)

The University Club operated through this period with fully functioning House, Membership, Finance, Entertainment, Sports, Publicity, and Lecture committees. (Historic Images, Figure 5) In 1941, the Club expanded its sports facilities settling on building an addition designed by Akron architect Roy G. Firestone³² "of two squash courts, one to be lined with maple, the other plastered – eliminating new exercise room, card room, locker room and steam bath - but to include a runway to the Grille Room to the courts, a new service driveway and entrance to the kitchen and coal hole" for a cost of \$12,468.³³ Shortly after completion, court usage indicated one squash and one handball court.³⁴ (Historic Images, Figures 2,3) With a concern for cost, the directors agreed it would be necessary to make a concentrated effort to secure new members. Club residence once again appeared popular during the World War II years with members given a preference for rooms. Non-members were informed that tenancy may be terminated upon one week's notice if a member wished to move in. It was also determined that "any person becoming a resident of the club shall not take possession until his or her sugar rationing card had been surrendered to the manager."³⁵

A regular schedule of club events and programming entertained members. (Historic Images, Figure 11) Club sponsored "Tire Town" shows continued to be popular with a full page of the *Akron Beacon Journal* on December 8, 1946, dedicated to the production of a three-act comedy "Snafu" presented by members of the Weathervane Theater at Goodyear Theater. In 1952-53, the club focused on improvements to attract new membership, particularly the need for upgraded ballroom and banquet facilities. B.F. Goodrich Company architect George E. McCord, Jr., prepared plans for a two-story addition approximately 37' x 39' between the ballroom wing and squash court wing to include ground floor men's locker rooms, shower and steam rooms, toilet, and card room to replace

³⁰ Letter to the Members, Akron University Club from A. Good, House Committee Chairman, 21 April 1925. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

³¹ "Wingfoot Clan," 29 January 1941. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

³² Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of The Akron University Club Company, 10 June 1941; Akron City Directory, 1941.

³³ Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of The Akron University Club Company, 15 July 1941.

³⁴ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of The Akron University Club Company, 18 August 1942.

³⁵ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of The Akron University Club Company, 21 July 1942.

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similar facilities, along with expanded ballroom dining and dancing areas at an estimated cost of \$35,000. Also included was remodeling of the men's locker room and ladies lounge and re-establishing a stairway from the ground level to first floor at the south end of the building at an estimated cost of \$4,500.³⁶ Bids were received in October with adjustments made to decrease cost.³⁷

In light of the expansion program, membership classification, qualification, initiation, and dues were revised in 1952-53 to include Active members (initiation \$30 [\$286.16 in 2019], dues \$6 per mo. [\$57.23 in 2019] - less than 5 years out of college; initiation \$60 [\$572.32 in 2019], dues \$6 [\$57.23 in 2019]- more than 5 years), Non-Resident members living outside Summit county (initiation \$30 [\$286.16 in 2019], annual dues \$20 [\$190.77 in 2019] – less than 5 years; initiation \$60 [\$572.32 in 2019], annual dues \$20 [\$190.77 in 2019] - more than 5 years), Associate members (initiation \$144 [\$1,373.58 in 2019], \$7.40 [\$70.59 in 2019] monthly dues), Life member, Honorary members, and Special members (initiation \$30 [\$286.16 in 2019], monthly dues \$3 [\$28.62 in 2019]) to include librarians, professors, instructors, clergy, members of the armed forces, or social workers.³⁸ Widows of members were given free club privileges.

As of December 31, 1952, club membership totaled 608 men, consisting of 443 Active, 97 Non-resident, 22 Life members, 19 Special Members, and 27 Associate members. Membership age was concentrated between 30-49 years with age groups consisting of: 60 yrs. and over, 28 - 6.4%; 50-59 yrs., 86 - 19.6%; 40-49 yrs., 131 - 29.9%; 30-39 yrs., 121 - 27.6%; and 20-29 yrs., 50 - 11.4 %, with no answer from the remaining 5.1%. Members were employed in a total of 42 different professions, primarily salesmen, engineers, attorneys, physicians, chemists, purchasing agents, insurance agents, and sales engineers. A total of 249 different companies were represented with the rubber industry predominant. The following 13 companies represented 36% of the active membership: The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. – 52; Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. – 45; The B.F. Goodrich Company – 19; General Tire & Rubber Co. – 11; E.C. McCormick – 5; B.W. Rogers – 4; M.A. Knight – 4; A.C. Supply Co. – 3; Ohio Edison – 3; Danner Press – 3; Vaughn Machine – 3; U.S. Stoneware – 3; and I.B.M. – 3. Overall, members were alumnae of 132 colleges with the top ten attended as: University of Akron, Ohio State, Cornell, Purdue, Carnegie Tech, University of Michigan, Yale, Kent State, Miami University, and Notre Dame.³⁹

The 1960s and Decline in the 1970s

In the 1970s and into the 1980s, the U.S. rubber and tire industry faced major challenges that altered the tire manufacturing industry landscape, directly impacting the Akron economy. The first was the emergence of the radial tire to replace the older "bias" and "bias-belted" tire construction. The cost to retrofit factories for radial production along with the hesitation to make the conversion opened the market to foreign competition. Imports were trending upwards with passenger tires representing 8% of total U.S. sales in 1972, increasing to 12% in 1982 and 22% in 1990.⁴⁰ Another factor was due in

³⁶ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of The Akron University Club Company, 21 July 1942; Akron City Directory, 1941.

³⁷ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of The Akron University Club Company, 16 October 1942.

³⁸ CPI Inflation Calculator. Available at <https://www.officialdata.org/1815-dollars-in-2019>.

³⁹ Membership Analysis, University Club of Akron, 31 December 1952. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

⁴⁰ French, Michael J. *The U.S. Tire Industry, A History*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991,102.

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part to the rise of the price of oil in the 1970s which decreased consumer demand. These challenges impacted the industry demonstrated by sluggish tire sales, the decline of tire prices in the U.S. market, and that tire-producing capacity outstripped demand along with labor unrest. The number of Akron area jobs in the tire industry dropped from 37,100 in 1964 to 32,700 in 1974 and to 15,400 in 1984. Unlike other rubber companies, The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company was able to weather the economic climate due to their success from 1960 to 1969 through diversified products, expansion to other cities, overseas and strategic acquisitions, and investing in the City of Akron with construction of the Goodyear Tire and Company World Headquarters (NR #13000683) in 1973.⁴¹

During the late 1960s and 1970s, the University Club dynamic changed with a decline in membership, a distinct reversal from the steady growth experienced since the 1920s. Akron industry had slumped with the exodus of the rubber industry executives along with the tumultuous decade of the 1970s. Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s influenced activists, many of which protested inequality and injustice through the Peace movement with Kent State shootings on May 4, 1970 (NR #10000046, NHL), Environmental movement with new legislation, and Women's Rights movement with failed attempt to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972. Counter movements emerged in the 1970s challenging generational and social norms of the establishment.

The University Club's response to addressing membership decline was to continue to provide expanded and upgraded facilities. In 1967, the University Club explored further expansion through purchase of property to the rear east of the University Club building along Hamilton Court⁴² for a swimming pool.⁴³ The Club reported a watch on financial health in 1969 with adjustments to balance the books with goals for annual profits going forward.

In the 1970s, club minutes reported members removed from the club with an attorney appointed to collect dues from expelled and resigned members with unpaid balances. To save money, the stock exchange board in the Grille Room was turned off and a goal was set towards making the food department profitable. The Membership committee focused on retaining current membership and recruiting new members. The Entertainment committee recommended that the "couples who ran the parties should be held over a second year to provide better continuity and let couples learn from their own mistakes." Sports activities continued including bowling, pool, and tennis tournaments, golf outing, squash, and handball with a report of a great annual club show.⁴⁴ A membership campaign was launched waving initiation fees and reducing membership dues, as well as requiring each member to recruit one new member. The campaign was indicative of the 1970s sentiment stating "We will attempt to get some news items during the campaign stressing our lack of restrictions with regard to race, color, creed, religious beliefs, age, marital status, or national origin. We will not be asking for a photograph with the application."⁴⁵ Newsletters, a drawing and party, special contacts and mailings, posters, promotion, and publicity were planned. This is the first mention of the

⁴¹ Kovac, Fred. *Tire Technology*, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, 1978, 155.

⁴² Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950; Hamilton Court has been replaced by parking lots along Chapel Drive.

⁴³ Report- Long Range Planning Committee Property Acquisition, 15 May 1967. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

⁴⁴ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the University of Akron Board of Trustees, 15 March 1976

⁴⁵ University Club Membership Campaign – 1976. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

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acceptance of women and minorities as club members, other than widows of club members. These changes in membership requirements were officially stated in new House Rules created in 1976.⁴⁶ The revised club house rules reflected a dramatic shift in club culture, likely influenced by the overall societal changes brought about during the 1970s. The opening paragraph emphasized that the club was,

“a community environment in which the actions of one resident directly or indirectly affect other residents. We view each of our members as capable of acting as adults living in an adult community. Pranks, water fights, and disorders are not tolerated. Experience has shown that these activities often lead to severe emotional and personal upset to individuals, serious bodily injury, costly damage to facilities, and the resultant undue inconvenience to many residents...”

Rules and Regulations prohibited:

- A. Detaining, holding, intimidating, injuring or threatening to injure or coerce by bodily harm any person lawfully on the property.
- B. Theft, malicious destruction, damage or injury to property not his own...
- C. Appropriating for his own property not his own without consent...
- D. Possession, use, or distribution of marijuana or any narcotic, hallucinogenic or other drug in either the refined or crude form which is prohibited by law.
- E. Unauthorized consumption, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages.
- F. Gambling or games of chance ...
- G. Illegal or unauthorized possession of firearms, explosives or other weapons.
- H. Offences defined as felonies or misdemeanors ...
- I. Unauthorized entry into, or use of University Club facilities...
- J. Failure to comply with directive of University Club officials and police or any other law enforcement...
- K. Violation of University Club regulations prohibiting dogs, other animals, fowl or reptiles on property.

Regulations went on to focus on alcoholic beverages, drug abuse, firearms and fireworks, flammable fluid, and finally visitation with a schedule of the maximum hours that a guest may have a guest of the opposite sex in his or her room extending visitation from noon to 2:00 AM on weekends.

⁴⁶ The University Club House Rules & Regulations, 1976. University Club Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.

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Important notes cautioned in capital letters to keep rooms locked at all items, windows closed, and not to loan room keys, and advised that large sums of money should not be kept in rooms or carried with residents. Insurance was advised and finally, “All residents are required to wear appropriate attire while using club facilities. Dress is proper evening attire.” The clash between earlier norms and the changing climate of the 1970s was apparent.

However, none of these measures resulted in additional members. In 1978, University of Akron Development Foundation took over the property and facilities of the University Club with the club membership voting 217-26 to approve the transaction. Club president William Plant announced that the club had become financially troubled due to a tremendous decrease in membership. It was agreed that the club would continue operation with membership dues lowered to \$5 from the previous fee of \$25, and opened to faculty, staff, and University of Akron alumnae association members. A campaign was organized to recruit alumnae as members. The Development Foundation board took on plans for a \$200,000 remodel of the building for uses to include University events. In turn the club continued to operate, leasing the facilities for \$1 per year and a percentage of the profits.⁴⁷ The name was changed to “University Club of Akron.”⁴⁸

The Final Years

By 1987 it was apparent that the days of the old University Club were over and the membership was disbanded.⁴⁹ The University of Akron remodeled the building for use as office and event space adding a rear southwest corner addition, new elevator and stair tower, and updating mechanical systems in 1988-89.⁵⁰ In 2004, the building was dedicated as the Martin Center to honor Paul E. Martin on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday, for his devotion and philanthropy to the University of Akron. Martin was a University of Akron graduate, member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity, Summit county automobile dealer and businessman, and noted civic and community leader.⁵¹ The building is operated by the University of Akron for office and event space and has remained vacant since 2015.

Criterion C

Harpster & Bliss

The 1917-19 University Club is an excellent example of the Georgian Revival style and represents the work of prominent and prolific Akron architects Harpster & Bliss. The traditional, classical architectural style of the building reflects the traditional Anglo-American rooted stylistic influences first introduced in club architecture by McKim, Mead & White in their east coast club designs of the late 19th century. Harpster & Bliss was featured in the April 1909 issue of *Ohio Architect and*

⁴⁷ *The Buchtelite*, University of Akron, February 1978,5. The University of Akron Archives, The University of Akron, Ohio; Summit County Deed from The Akron University Club Co. to The University of Akron Development Foundation,17 February 1978.

⁴⁸ Agreement in Principal between University Club of Akron and The University of Akron Development Foundation, 11 November 1977. The University of Akron Archives, The University of Akron, Ohio.

⁴⁹ University of Akron Martin Center, History. AIA Akron. Available at <http://aiaakron.org/2013/03/20122013-design-awards-program-2/>.

⁵⁰ Summit County Parcel #6756811, Building Card; Request for Proposal for Highest and Best Use to Repurpose the Paul E. Martin Center. Attachment 3- Building History/Data/Description. The University of Akron, 19 November 2014.

⁵¹ “Remembering Philanthropist Dr. Paul E. Martin.” 6 August 2010. Available at https://www.uakron.edu/im/online-newsroom/news_details.dot?newsId=1290076.

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Builder as designers of commercial, institutional, and religious buildings as well as residential homes for wealthy residents of Akron. The practice covered a wide range of projects, with training as well as engineers. The architecture of Harpster & Bliss reflect the late 19th and early 20th century Beaux Arts trained architect whose skill can be seen in their use of classically-derived styles and period revivals exhibiting a wide range of stylistic expressions suitable to the nature of the commission, an overall unity of design, use of quality materials and impressive richly detailed interiors. Their predominant clients are the men and companies represented within the social ranking of the memberships of such clubs and organizations as the University Club.

Milton Eugene Harpster was born in 1871 in Findlay, Ohio, and attended Findlay College. He obtained a master's degree in architecture from Cornell University and began his practice as an intern with prominent Findlay and Cincinnati architects. He entered into his own business in Findlay in 1900 and moved to Akron in 1904 receiving training from and taking over the practice of architect F. O. Weary. In 1907, the offices of Harpster & Bliss were combined and became located in the 1910 Nantucket Building, 17-23 S. Main Street, designed by the firm (NR #03000719, Main-Market HD). After Bliss died in 1925, Harpster joined Frank Billman until 1936. Thereafter he continued in solo practice until his death in 1949.⁵²

John Frederick Bliss was born in Baden, Germany, in 1874, arriving to Akron in 1889. He joined the firm of Weary & Kramer until 1903, and then architect Edward H. Bunts. The firm of Bunts & Bliss designed in Akron the First Presbyterian Church, the Samuel Findley School (HABS, OH 2480), the first Y.M.C.A. (demolished for the Mayflower Hotel on S. Main Street) and the 1906 Late Gothic/ Tudor Revival Salvation Army Citadel (demolished) on N. Main Street. After the death of Bunts, Bliss joined with Harpster until his death in 1925.⁵³

Harpster & Bliss designs ranged in style from Late Gothic Revival and Classical, Free English Manorial, to Colonial style American Foursquare and progressive eclectic homes for prominent Summit County residents. Their most notable residential design was the 50,000 sq. ft. brick Second Renaissance Revival style 1909-10 O.C. Barber Mansion with 52 rooms, elevator and glass skylight, described by the *New York Times* as the finest mansion between New York and Chicago (demolished 1965).⁵⁴ The property included the 1905 Anna-Dean Farm, OH 619, Barberton, OH (NR #77001086) and 1912 O.C Piggery 248 Robinson Ave., Barberton, OH (NR #73001540), also designed by Harpster & Bliss.

Harpster & Bliss designed residences included the Free English Manorial style 1913-1914 Frank. H. Mason House, Brighton Farm, with Tudor and Craftsman influences located at Turkey Foot Lake, Akron (NR #95000499, demolished). Six Bliss & Harpster designed houses are part of the Hall Park Allotment Historic District (NR #02001274) and include: the brick American Foursquare 1907 Louise P. Dettling Residence 134 Oakdale Ave.; the brick 1908 J.V. Swartz Residence, 397 Woodland; Brick American Foursquare with Colonial Revival influences 1908 J. Nobil Residence,

⁵² Stevens, Vincent S. "Akron, the City of Opportunity - The Work of Harpster & Bliss of Akron Ohio," *Ohio Architect and Builder*, Vol. 13, No.4 April 1909,13-18; Main - Market Historic District, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR# 03000719).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Summit Memory Project. Available at <http://summitmemory.org>.

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82 Oakdale Ave.; brick Craftsman 1910 163 Oakdale Avenue House; Prairie 1912 398 Woodland Ave. House; and, brick hybrid with symmetrical plan and Tudor Revival influences 1918 407 Woodland Ave. House.

Prominent clients with Harpster & Bliss designed homes included the Free English Manorial Residence of C.I. Brunner, 110 Twin Oaks, Akron; Classical style Residence of Dr. Simon Morgenroth, 645 Diagonal Road (demolished); Italian Renaissance Revival Residence of Harry Polsky, 633 Diagonal Road, (demolished); Free English Manorial style Residence of G. A. Rohner, 912 Hereford Drive; Georgian Revival residence of Byron R. Barder, 1041 West Market Street with elaborate private ballroom; Georgian Gothic Revival 1904 Grace House, 22 High Street; Renaissance Revival Residence of C. Landon Knight, 80 N. Portage Trail (demolished) and Progressive with Tudor Revival style influence Residence of Maurice A. Knight Sr., 711 Portage Path.⁵⁵

Commercial work by the firm includes classically inspired designs demonstrated by the 1916 Ohio Building and Annex, 171-189 S. Main Street (1990 addition) eight-story office building (NR #08000622, in South Main Street HD) and Neoclassical with Craftsman influenced 1910 Nantucket Building (NR #03000719, Main – Market HD). The firm designed functional manufacturing buildings including the 1910 Firestone Rubber Company Plant No. 1 factory and office building, 1200 Firestone Parkway, Akron (NR# 14000338) and later the Free English Manorial style 1912 Residence of Harvey S. Firestone (Harbel Manor) on W. Market (demolished).

School designs include the Second Renaissance Revival 1916 Bowen School, 70 N. Broadway Street with Arts and Crafts elements (NR #03000719, Main – Market HD); and Neoclassical Portage Path School, West High School and South High School (demolished 1979) in Akron. The firm designed the limestone Neoclassical 1918 Masonic Temple (aka Greystone Hall) 103 South High Street, Akron⁵⁶ (NR #03000719, Main – Market HD). Churches & Temples designed by the firm include the Gothic Revival style Christ Reformed Church, Orrville, OH; and Neoclassical inspired First Methodist Episcopal, First Church Christ Scientist Temple Israel and brick Neoclassical “Akron Plan” 1911-1912 East Market Street Church of Christ, 864 East Market Street (NR #88003440).

The classically designed 1908 Central Police Station, S. High & Bowery Streets Akron, (demolished) and Beaux Arts style 1918 Akron Armory (demolished), the largest indoor gathering place in the city for many years, were designed by the firm.

The Akron City Club (1915-2003) located in the Commercial style 1916 Ohio Building, 171-189 S. Main Street with terra cotta façades at the corner of South Main and Church Streets (South Main Street HD NR# 08000622) was designed by Fred Harpster of Harpster & Bliss with the top three floors of the eight-story commercial office building designed to house the club. The University Club is the only known example of purpose-built club building designed by Harpster & Bliss. The building reflects their classical style interpreting the American Colonial Revival and drawing from

⁵⁵ Stevens, Vincent S., 13-18; Summit Memory Project.

⁵⁶ Masonic Temple, Akron Ohio. Available at

http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM7CG6_Former_Masonic_Temple_Akron_Ohio

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historic precedents to recreate residential architectural design within the social club building type. As architects to the wealthy of Akron, the firm was a logical choice for the design of the community's elite social gathering place. Research did not reveal membership lists to determine if Harpster & Bliss were members the club.

Roy Firestone

The 1941 squash and handball court addition to the University Club was designed by Roy G. Firestone (1897-1970). Firestone, not related to the more well-known Firestones of Akron, was born in 1897 and raised on a farm in Stark county. He dropped out of school after eighth grade to help with farm work and took his first job with Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. In 1919, Akron's Krumroy's Construction hired him as a draftsman. He designed homes for the company and rose to the position of secretary before leaving in 1935 to join Harold Cassidy forming the architecture firm of Firestone and Cassidy. The firm designed fine homes as well as commercial buildings for clients including General Tire and People's Hospital. Firestone eventually set up solo practice, designing at least 173 homes in the Summit County area between the 1920's and 1960s. His designs were classically inspired, primarily Tudor Revival, Georgian Revival, Spanish Colonial, and French Neoclassical.⁵⁷

George E. McCord

B.F. Goodrich Company architect George E. McCord Jr. (1903-1990)⁵⁸ designed the 1952-53 two-story University Club addition between the ballroom wing and squash court wing including ground floor men's locker rooms, shower and steam rooms, toilet, and card room to replace similar facilities, along with expanded ballroom dining and dancing areas at an estimated cost of \$35,000. In addition, he remodeled the men's locker room and ladies lounge and reestablished a stairway from the ground level to first floor at the south end of the building.⁵⁹

Conclusion

The University Club of Akron was founded in 1909 as a men's social club with the membership roster reflecting the elite of Akron as the "Rubber Capital of the World." The club allowed for social interaction and professional advancement through the membership open exclusively to men with at least two years of college. It offered an attractive residence in a residential style building serving as a post-graduate dormitory for men newly out of college and starting their careers in Akron industries. A university club was a variation of the broader category of gentlemen's clubs such as men's business clubs, family-oriented country clubs and fraternal clubs. Gentleman's clubs, including the university club model, were private places that were designed to allow men to relax and create friendships with other men with shared interests in either politics, literature, sports, art, automobiles, travel, or through the connection between members of the same school or university or branches of the armed forces. Clubs were regarded as a central part of elite men's lives, providing everything a regular home would have and created a space to relieve stress and worries including

⁵⁷ Firestone, Roy G., Scrapbooks. Akron-Summit County Library; *Akron Beacon Journal*, "Architect Roy Firestone finally getting his due for helping shape the face of Akron," 19 July 2015.

⁵⁸ U.S. Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014. Available at *Ancestry.com*; Summit County, Ohio Marriage Records, 1840-1980. Available at *Ancestry.com*.

⁵⁹ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of The Akron University Club Company, 21 July 1942; Akron City Directory, 1941.

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dining halls, library, entertainment and game rooms, rooms for sleep, bathrooms and washrooms, and a study. The University Club hired Harpster & Bliss as architects to the wealthy of Akron to build their beautiful and stately Georgian Revival building where members could interact and forge new business relationships through smokers, stag parties, dinners, dances, lectures, and athletic events. By the late twentieth century, the rubber industry began to decline in Ohio. The corresponding decade of 1970s with Civil Rights, Peace, Environmental and Women's equality movements pushed out the role of the traditional men's social club. These factors were reflected in the demise of the University Club in the 1970s and final closing in 1987.⁶⁰ The University Club building is an excellent example of Georgian Revival architecture and representative of the popularity of men's university based social clubs during the first half of the twentieth century up to the 1970s, as the exclusive University Club of the City of Akron.

⁶⁰ "Rubber Industry." *Ohio History Central*. Available at http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Rubber_Industry; U.S Federal Population Census, 1910,1920.

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National Register & Historic American Building Survey

Anna-Dean Farm, Barberton, Summit County, OH (NR# 77001086)

East Market Street Church of Christ, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR# 880034400)

Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR #14000338)

Goodyear Hall, Ohio Savings and Trust Company, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR# 14000030)

The University Club
Name of Property

Summit County, OH
County and State

Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company Headquarters, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR# 13000683)
Hall Park Allotment Historic District, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR# 02001274)
Harvard Club of New York City, New York County, NY (NR #80002693)
Mason, Frank H. House, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR# 95000499)
May 4, 1970, Kent State University Shootings Site, Portage County, OH (NR# 10000046,NHL)
Main – Market Historic District, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR# 03000179)
O.C. Barber Piggery, Barberton, Summit County, OH (NR# 73001540)
Samuel Findlay School, Akron, Summit County, OH (HABS OH 2480)
Seiberling, Charles Willard House, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR 93000405)
South Main Street Historic District, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR# 08000622)
Stager-Beckwith House, Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, OH (NR#78002042)
Stan Hywet Hall - Frank A. Seiberling House, Akron, Summit County, OH (NR# 75002058)
University Club, New York, NY (NR# 80002726)
Upper Prospect MRA, Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, OH (NR #19841101)

The University Club
Name of Property

Summit County, OH
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: The University of Akron Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 2.92 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 41.078422 | Longitude: 81.506612 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or
UTM References

The University Club
Name of Property

Summit County, OH
County and State

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: 457431 | Northing: 4547375 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is situated in the City of Akron, Summit County, Ohio. The boundary of the historic University Club property follows the boundary of Summit County Parcels #6756811, #6854837 and #6756812; property address 105 Fir Hill, Akron.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundary includes the historically significant University Club building constructed between 1917-1919 with additions in 1941, 1952-53 and 1988-89 located on Summit County Parcels #6756811, #6854837 and #6756812.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Wendy Hoge Naylor, Diana Wellman
organization: Naylor Wellman, LLC
street & number: 92 East Washington Street
city or town: Chagrin Falls state: OH zip code: 44022
e-mail: naylor@naylorwellman.com; wellman@naylorwellman.com
telephone: 440-247-8319
date: January 30, 2019

The University Club
Name of Property

Summit County, OH
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: University Club

City or Vicinity: Akron

County: Summit

State: Ohio

Photographer: Diana Wellman

Date Photographed: December, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 17.

1. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0001): Facade, West Elevation, camera direction W.
2. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0002): Façade, West Elevation, portico, camera direction SE.
3. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0003): Façade, West Elevation, entrance, camera direction SE.
4. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0004): Façade, West Elevation, Juliette balcony, camera direction NE.

The University Club
Name of Property

Summit County, OH
County and State

5. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0005): Façade, West Elevation & North Elevation, camera direction SE.
6. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0006): Façade, West Elevation & South Elevation, camera direction NE.
7. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0007): South Elevation, entry, camera direction NE.
8. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0008): South & Rear East Elevations, 1988-89 addition camera direction W.
9. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0009): Rear East Elevation, entry, camera direction SW.
10. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0010): Rear East Elevation, 1941 courts, 1952-53 addition, camera direction SW.
11. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0011): First Floor Interior Lobby, camera direction N.
12. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0012): First Floor Interior Lobby, stairs, camera direction S.
13. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0013): First Floor Interior Library, camera direction NW.
14. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0014): First Floor Interior Library, camera direction NE.
15. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0015): First Floor Interior Ballroom, camera direction SE.
16. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0016): First Floor Interior Ballroom, camera direction SW.
17. (OH_Summit_The University Club_0017): First Floor Interior Ballroom, bracket detail, camera direction N.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

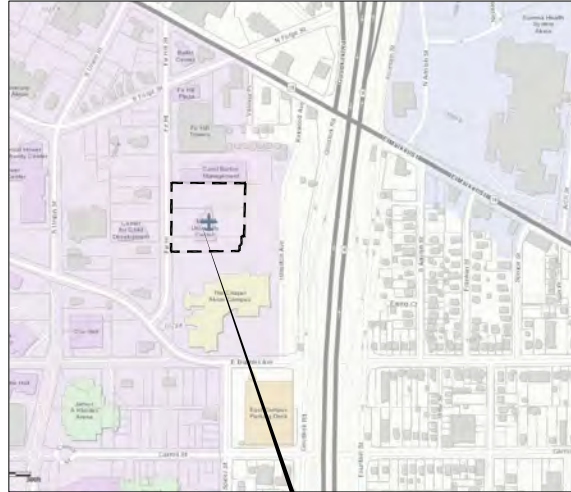
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

THE UNIVERSITY CLUB
Summit County, Ohio

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**






Section number Additional Documentation-Location & Property Dev. Page 1

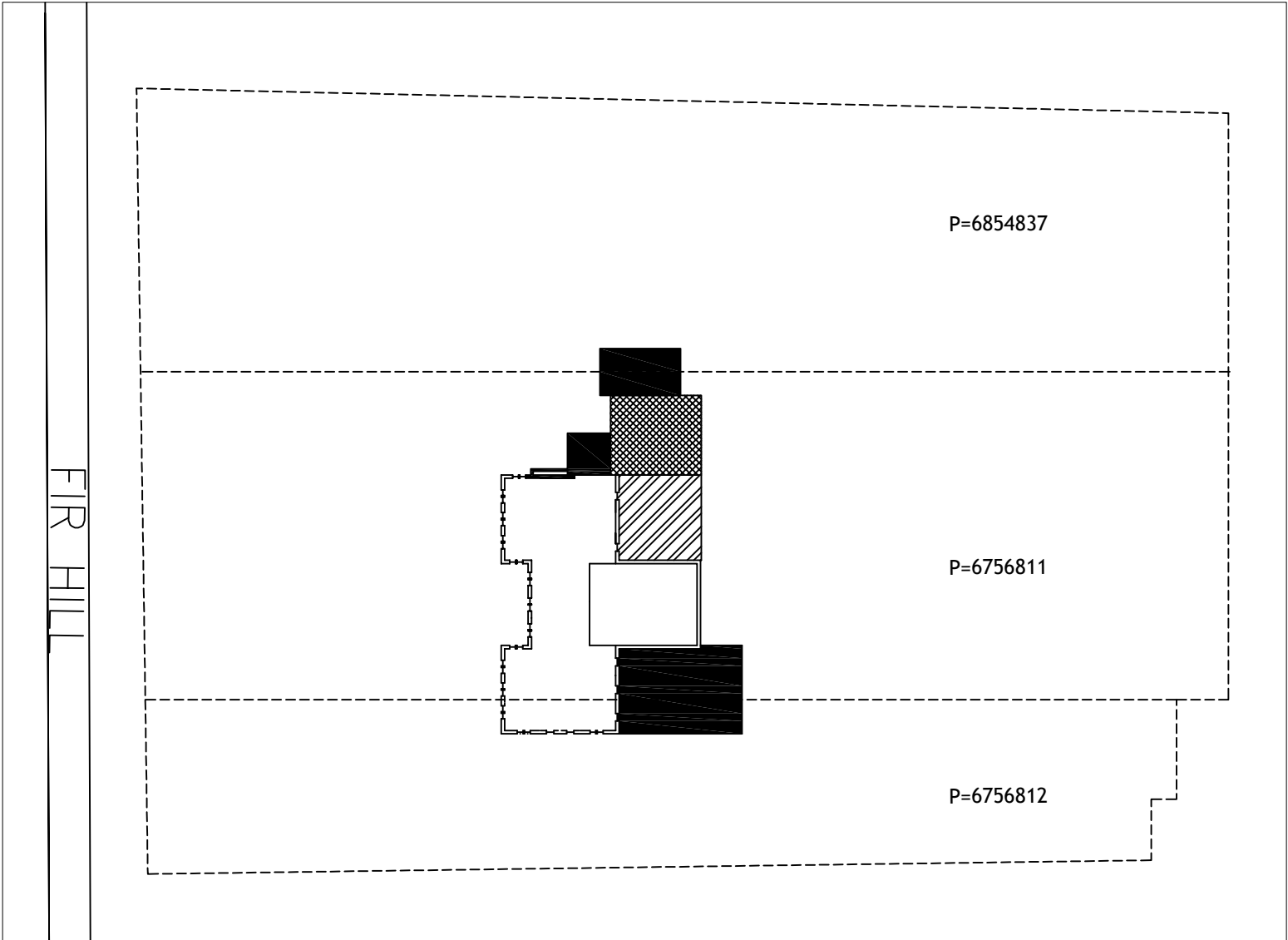


GIS SUMMIT COUNTY LOCATION MAP

LEGEND

Not to Scale

-  1917-1919 HISTORIC BUILDING
-  1941 ADDITION
-  1952-53 ADDITION
-  1988-89 ADDITIONS
-  PARCEL BOUNDARY
- P = xxxxxxxx PARCEL NUMBER



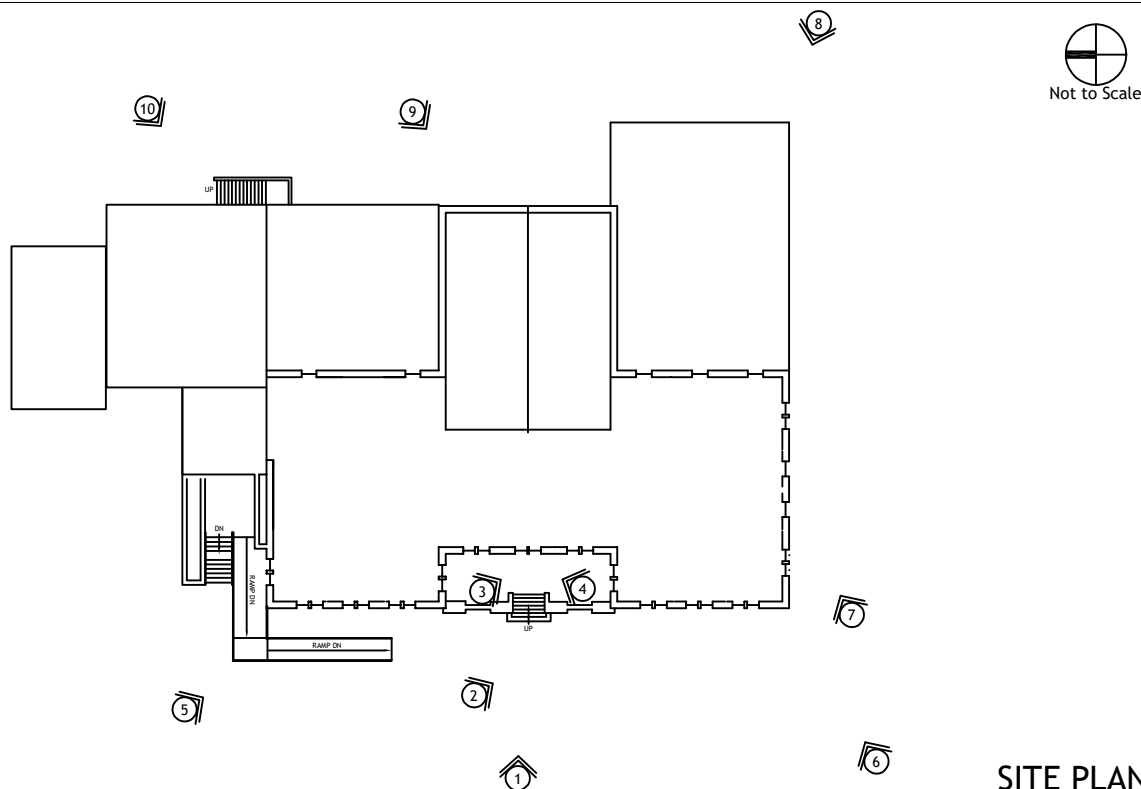
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

THE UNIVERSITY CLUB
Summit County, Ohio

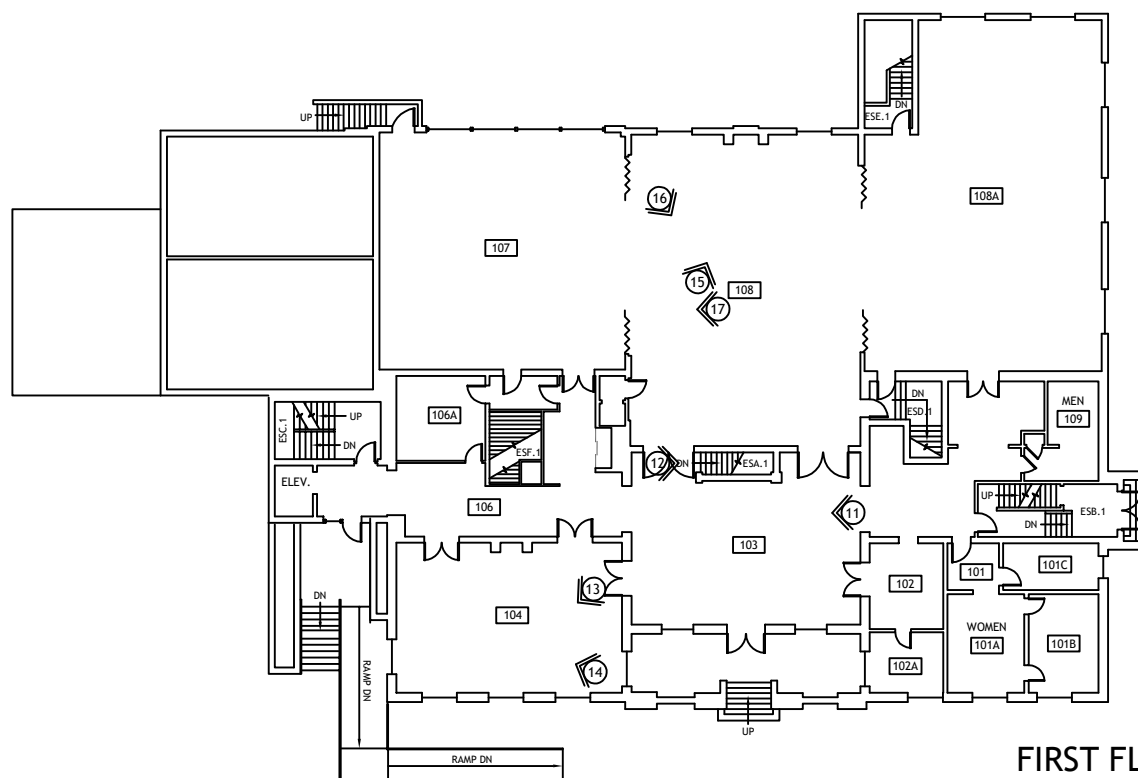
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation-Photo-Key

Page 2



SITE PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

The University Club
Summit County, Ohio

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps & Images

Page 1



Figure 1. The University Club, 1921

Source: Plat Book of City of Akron Ohio and Vicinity, Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, 1921.

United States Department of the Interior
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The University Club
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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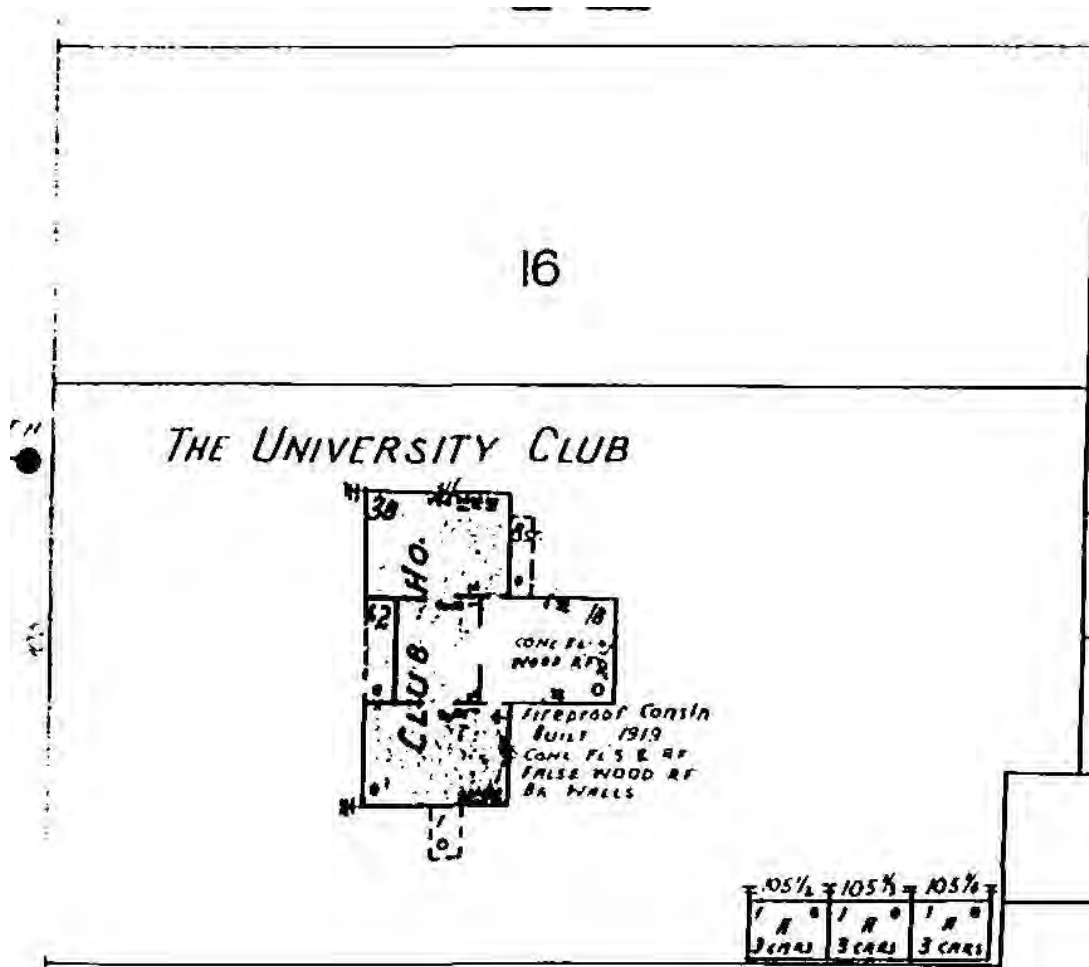


Figure 2. The University Club, 1940

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1940

United States Department of the Interior
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Summit County, Ohio

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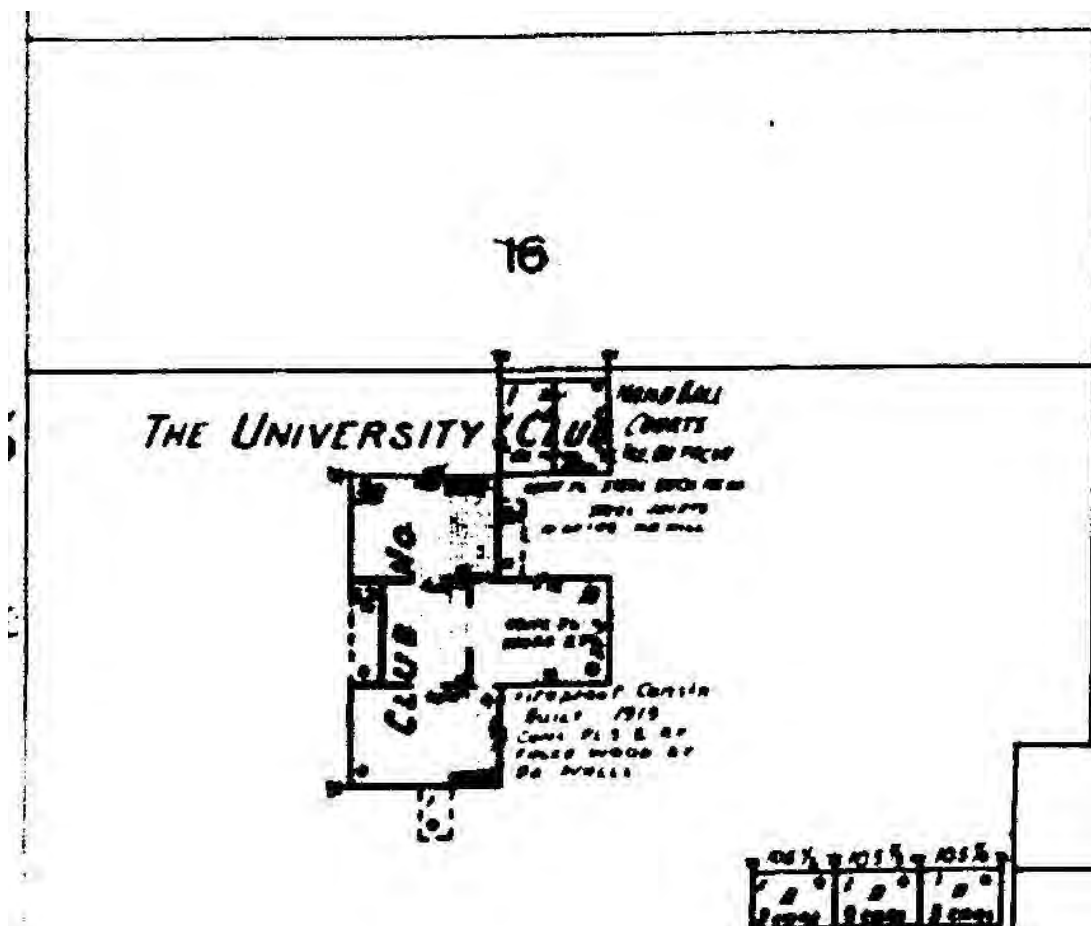


Figure 3. The University Club, 1950

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 4. The University Club, Postcard, 3 December 1919

Source: Ruth Wright Clinefelter Postcard Collection, Summit Memory. Available at <http://summitmemory.org>.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 5. University Club, Photo, 1937

Source: The University of Akron Archives, The University of Akron, Ohio.

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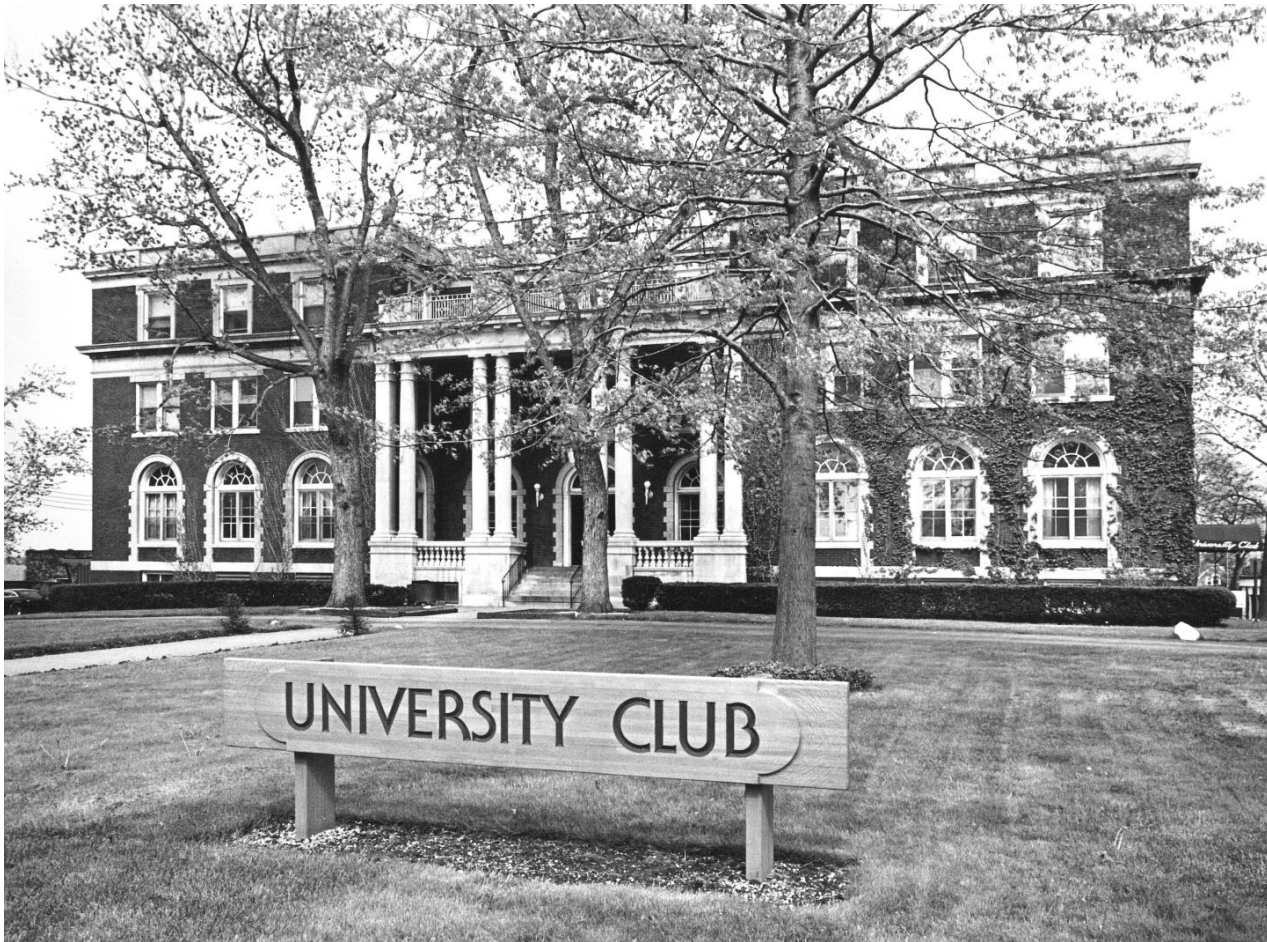


Figure 6. The University Club, Photo, ca. 1970s

Source: The University of Akron Archives, The University of Akron, Ohio.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 7. The University Club, Image, 1978

Source: *The Buchtelite*, University of Akron, February 1978. The University of Akron Archives, The University of Akron, Ohio, 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 8. The University Club Lobby, Photo, 1979

Source: The University of Akron Archives, The University of Akron, Ohio.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
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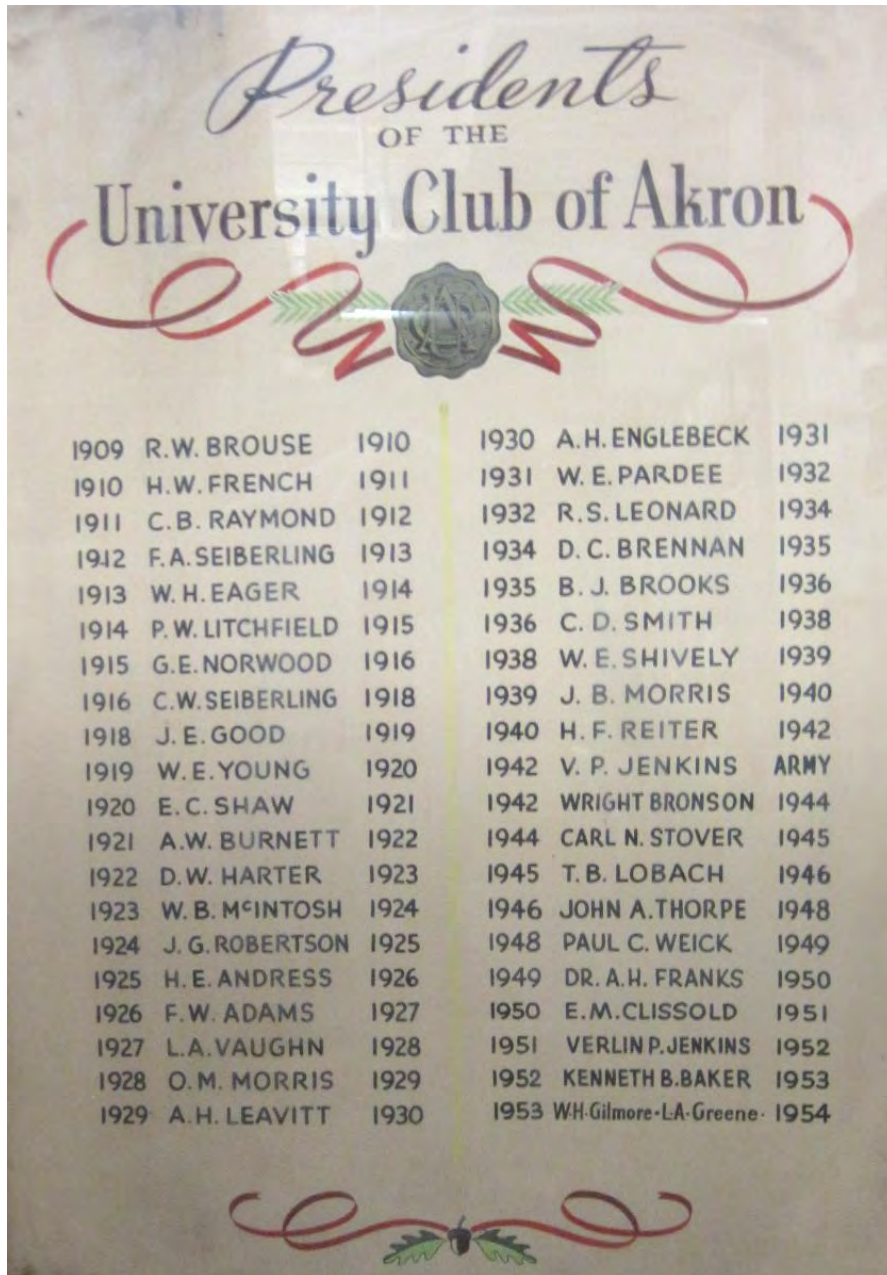


Figure 9. Presidents of The University Club, 1954

Source: The University of Akron Archives, The University of Akron, Ohio.

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National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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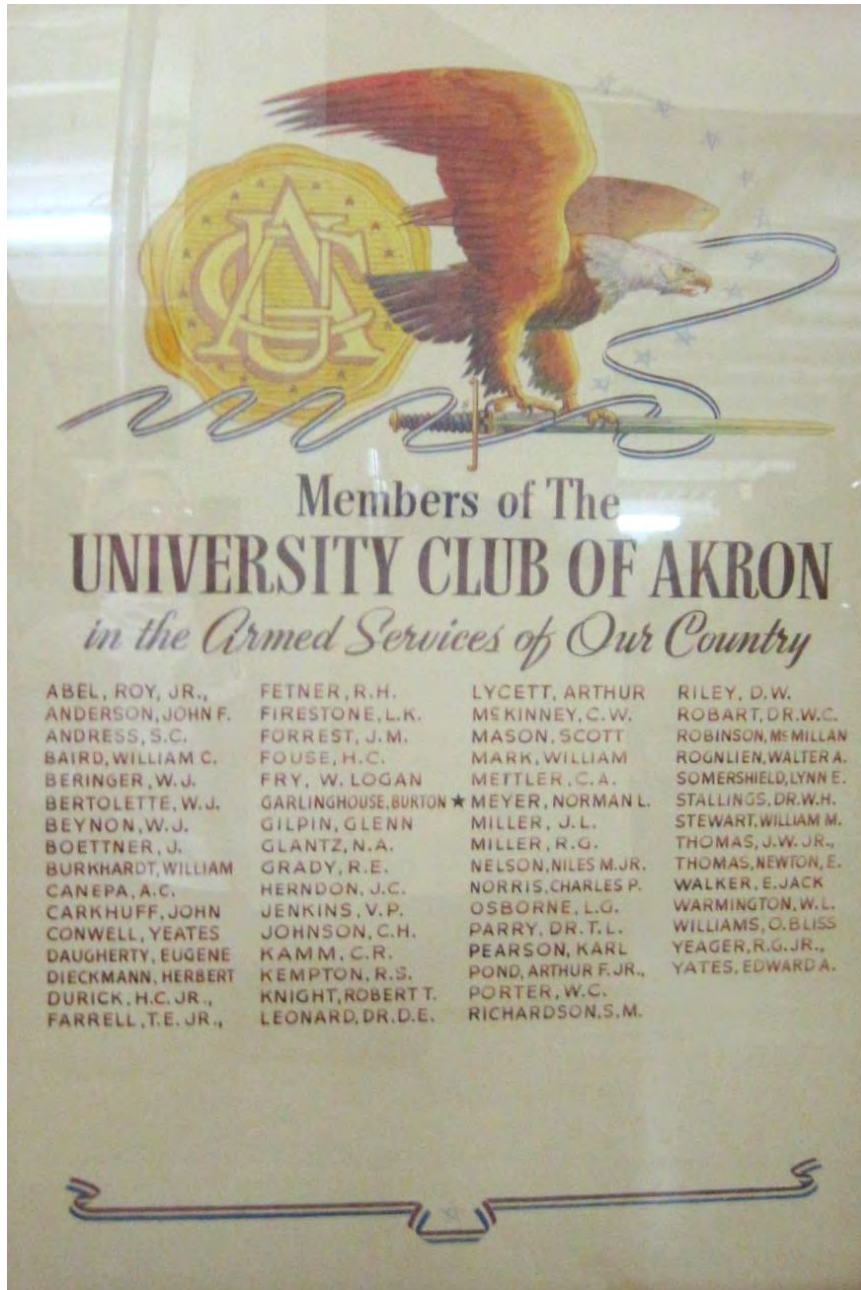


Figure 10. The University Club Members in Service, World War II

Source: The University of Akron Archives, The University of Akron, Ohio.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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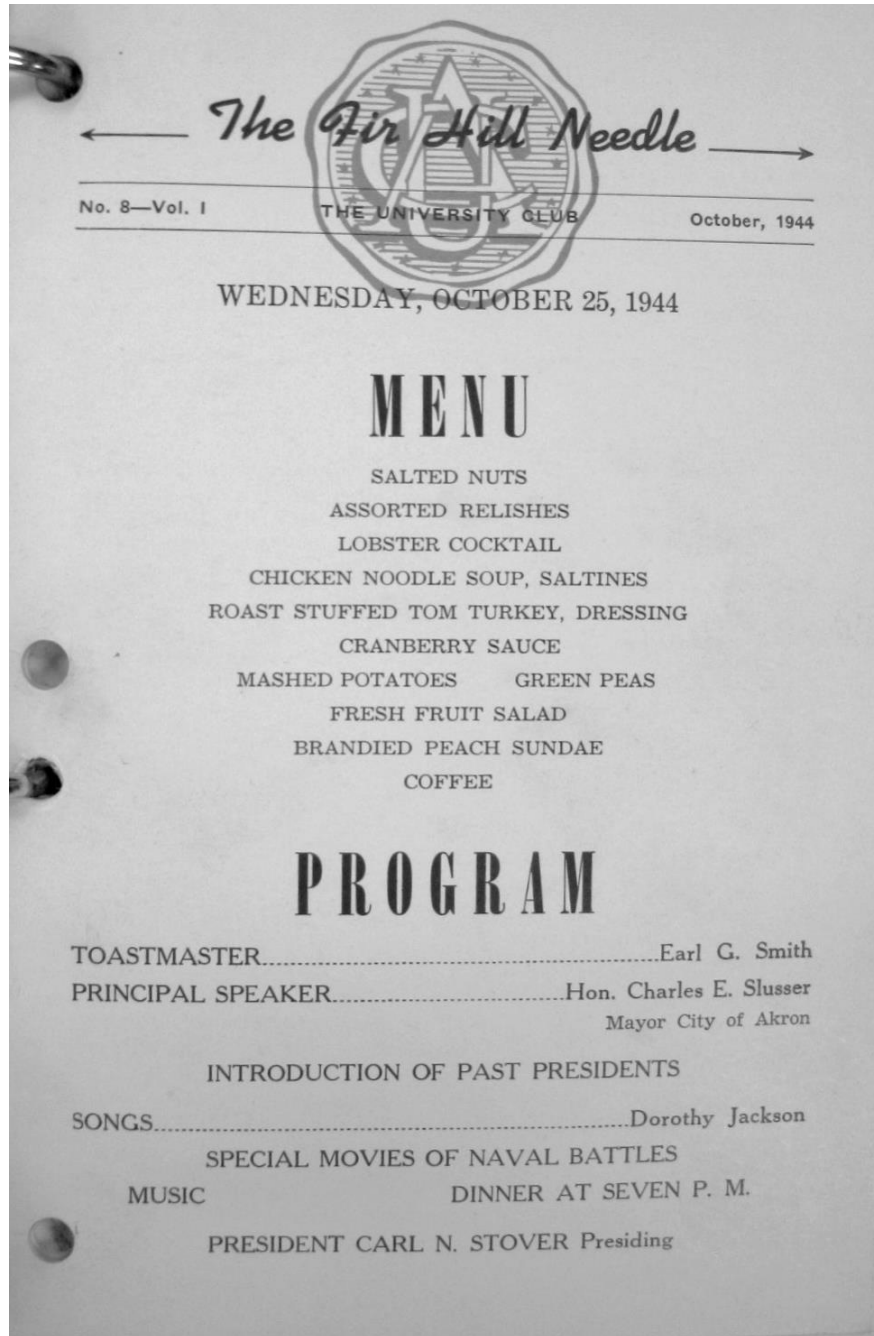
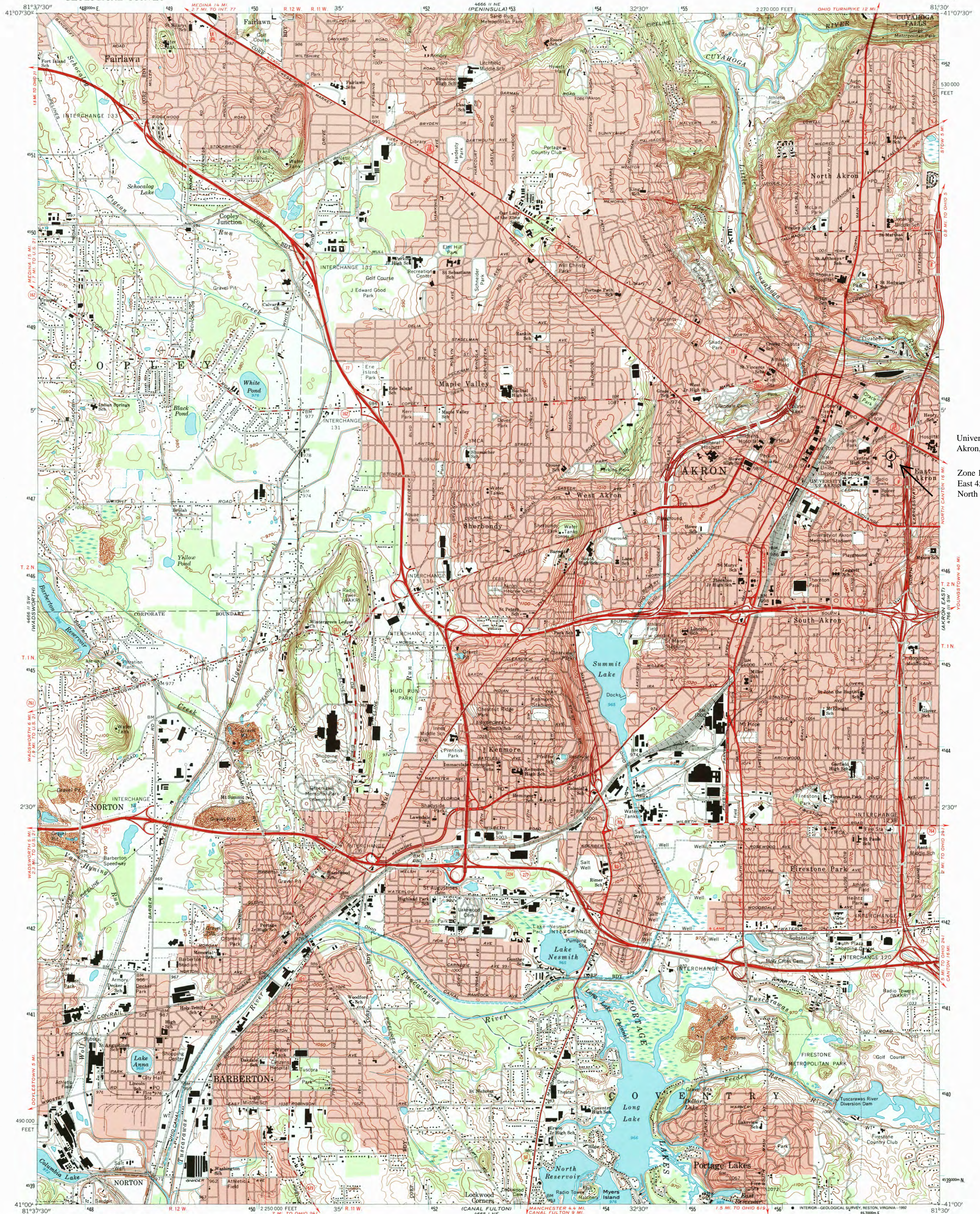


Figure 11. The University Club, Menu & Event Program, 25 October 1944

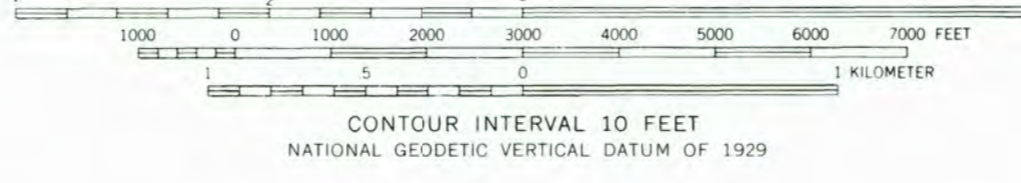
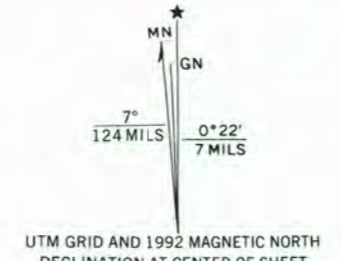
Source: Alan G. Darling Collection. The University of Akron Archives. The University of Akron, Ohio.



University Club, The,
Akron, Summit County, Ohio

Zone 17
East 457431
North 4547375

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Revised in cooperation with State of Ohio Agencies
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1957. Field checked 1958. Revised from aerial
photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967.
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Ohio coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 17, shown in blue
The difference between 1927 North American Datum and North
American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) for 7.5-minute intersections
is given in USGS Bulletin 1875. The NAD 83 is shown by
dashed corner ticks
Entire area lies within the Connecticut Western Reserve
Land lines established by private subdivision of the
Connecticut Western Reserve



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225 OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION
Revisions compiled in cooperation with State of
Ohio agencies from aerial photographs
taken 1988 and other sources. Contours not
revised. This information not field checked
Map edited 1992

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather

Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

AKRON WEST, OHIO
41081-A5-TF-024
1967
REVISED 1992
DMA 4666 II SE—SERIES V852



































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: University Club

Multiple Name:

State & County: OHIO, Summit

Date Received: 10/16/2019 Date of Pending List: 11/12/2019 Date of 16th Day: 11/27/2019 Date of 45th Day: 12/2/2019 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100004706

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> TCP	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> CLG	

Accept Return Reject 12/2/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary NR Criteria: A & C.
Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria AOS: Entertainment/Recreation, Architecture, Social History; POS: 1917-1970; LOS: local.
Akron architects and engineers: Harpster & Bliss.

Reviewer Lisa Deline Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239 Date 12/2/19

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



October 11, 2019

Julie Ernstein, Acting Chief, National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Ernstein:

Enclosed please find three new National Register nominations for Ohio. All appropriate notification procedures have been followed for the new nomination submissions.

NEW NOMINATIONS

Castalia Trout Club
Findlay Country Club Golf Course
University Club


COUNTY

Erie
Hancock
Summit

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the information to the National Register of Historic Places nominations for Findlay Country Club Golf Course and University Club.

If you have questions or comments about these documents, please contact the National Register staff in the Ohio Historic Preservation Office at (614) 298-2000.

Sincerely,

for 

Lox A. Logan, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO
State Historic Preservation Officer
Ohio History Connection

Enclosures



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NPS TRANSMITTAL CHECK LIST

OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
800 E. 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211
(614)-298-2000

The following materials are submitted on Oct. 11, 2019
For nomination of the University Club to the National Register of
Historic Places: Summit County, OH

- Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination Cover Document
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Photographs
 Prints TIFFs
- CD with electronic images
- Original USGS map(s)
 Paper Digital
- Sketch map(s)/Photograph view map(s)/Floor plan(s)
 Paper PDF
- Piece(s) of correspondence
 Paper PDF
- Other _____

COMMENTS:

- Please provide a substantive review of this nomination
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
Constitute a majority of property owners
- Other: _____