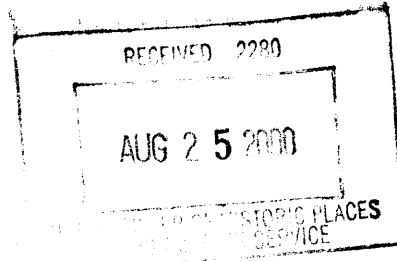


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1140



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Steele Dunning Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number see continuation sheet N/A  not for publication

city or town Bloomington N/A  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Monroe code 105 zip code 47404

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

9/22/00  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building, district, site, structure, object

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: 25, 8, 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 27, 8.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

19th & 20th c. AMER.: Bungalow/Craftsman

MODERN:

foundation STONE: Limestone

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

WOOD: Shingle

roof ASPHALT

other STONE: Limestone

CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMUNITY PLANNING &
INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1898-1950

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

The Steele Dunning Historic District  
Name of Property

Monroe IN  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.73 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	6	5	3	9	1	4	0	4	3	3	5	5	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

3 

1	6	5	3	9	8	8	0	4	3	3	4	8	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

2 

1	6	5	3	9	1	4	0	4	3	3	5	8	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

4 

1	6	5	3	9	8	8	0	4	3	3	4	5	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eliza Steelwater, PH.D  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number 4541 Stidd Lane telephone 812-334-1107  
city or town Bloomington state Ind. zip code 47408

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

##### Continuation Sheets

##### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

##### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

##### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Steele Dunning Historic District, Monroe County, IN

### List of Contributing Buildings in the Steele-Dunning Historic District

#### West Fourth Street

1. 620 West Fourth Street
2. 612 West Fourth Street
3. 608 West Fourth Street
4. 600 West Fourth Street
5. 522 West Fourth Street
6. 520 West Fourth Street
7. 715 West Fourth Street
8. 713 West Fourth Street
9. 705 West Fourth Street
10. 701 West Fourth Street
11. 621 West Fourth Street
12. 613 West Fourth Street
13. 607 and 605 West Fourth Street
14. 603 and 601 West Fourth Street
15. 521 West Fourth Street
16. 517 West Fourth Street

#### West Third Street

17. 712 West Third Street
18. 710 West Third Street
19. 706 West Third Street
20. 704 West Third Street
21. 618 West Third Street
22. 616 West Third Street

#### South Jackson Street

23. 210 South Jackson
24. 213 South Jackson

#### South Fairview

25. 209 South Fairview

#### Contributing Objects

26. Limestone sidewalk in front of 213 South Jackson
27. Limestone sidewalk in front of 210-218 South Jackson

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Steele Dunning Historic District, Monroe County, IN

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### DESCRIPTION

The Steele Dunning District in Bloomington, Indiana, consists of a compact residential area on a moderate north-facing slope at the northwest boundary of the previously nominated Prospect Hill Historic District. The Steele Dunning area contains 27 contributing and 8 non-contributing resources. Contributors include 25 buildings and two objects, both sidewalks. Contributing buildings date from 1898 or earlier to 1948-1950 (closest available dating). This unusually extended range of style periods, contained within a roughly two-block area, results from gradual subdivision of a large, one-owner parcel of land. The parcel was attached to the Paris Dunning House (built 1822-1845), an individually nominated resource within the original Prospect Hill Historic District. The Steele Dunning District is composed of mostly one-story buildings influenced by the Late Victorian, Early 20th Century American, and Modern style periods. Of its vernacular buildings, two reflect the continuation of log-built forms into post-railroad-era frame housing. The Steele Dunning District, though more modest architecturally than nearby Prospect Hill, is linked architecturally through a similar preponderance of certain historical styles: 5 Free Classic houses, 8 Bungalows, 2 Pyramidal-roof cottages, and 4 T-plan cottages (similar in appearance to double-ells). The Steele Dunning District lies adjacent on the northwest to Prospect Hill Historic District and adjacent on the south to the West Side Historic District. The Steele Dunning District is north and east of a not-yet-designated area, developed by 1913 or earlier, that contains Late Victorian and Early 20th Century American houses of similar scale.

The Steele Dunning District illustrates stylistic development through time of modest, production-designed housing. It stands in contrast to other Bloomington neighborhoods in that as many as half of its houses built circa 1900-1930 were occupied from the beginning as rental units. Four one-story, wood-framed Free Classic houses designed for two households (photo # 4, 8-11) achieved the prestigious appearance of single-family dwellings through asymmetrically shaped street facades and inconspicuous placement of each entryway within a corner of the porch. As a comparison, two-household dwellings in the University Courts Historic District present more contrasts than similarities. University Courts is a later and grander neighborhood whose houses are mostly two-story, brick- or limestone-veneered, or built of mixed masonry and wood. Styles

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district, as well as a street running north-south through the Steele Dunning District area. Crests of two other hills in the general area are located at Banneker Center and Rose Hill Cemetery. The Steele Dunning District lies due north of the hilltop and slopes northeast toward the flatter downtown part of the city.

The Steele Dunning District is made up of parts of six city blocks. An irregular street grid, imperfect alignment from block to block, and varying street widths reflect the location of the Steele Dunning District area at the intersection of several historical plats whose form changed over time. West Fourth Street narrows from about 82 to 48 feet wide west of South Jackson, both Jackson and West Third are only about 30 feet wide, and Fairview measures approximately 40 feet wide. The southwest bounds of Bloomington's original townsite, South Jackson and West Third streets, pass through the northeast side of the Steele Dunning District. Townsite blocks are nearly square at 260 by 306 feet, divided into four pairs of lots by crossed and intersecting alleys. Each north-south rectangular lot measures 66 by 132 feet (all measurements approximate). Two original townsite blocks form the northeast edge of the Steele Dunning District. Crossing South Jackson going west along the north side, lots on the next block are deeper (147 feet) and slightly narrower. The following block, north of Fourth between Fairview and Maple, is divided into 10 lots of 62 by 147 feet, also crossed by intersecting alleys. The eastern part of this block is inside the Steele Dunning District. These blocks and other remaining parts of the Steele Dunning District were "out lots" of the original townsite and later developed as various named additions.

The developed lots carved from out lots in the two southern blocks of the Steele Dunning District vary considerably in size and shape, for example, 46 by 248 feet along part of Fairview and 46 by 127 or 63 by 127 across the street. This part of the Steele Dunning District area occupies most of a large square bounded by West Fourth on the north, South Jackson on the east, West Third on the south, and South Maple on the west. Most of this square was originally part of the Paris Dunning parcel, whose piecemeal sale over time shaped street, alley, and building placement. Fairview Street, previously laid out both north and south of this parcel, did not originally run between Fourth and Third. This block may have been used informally as early as

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District's edge at the east end of West Fourth (500-block odd numbered) features three Late Victorian houses (photo#12, 13). These abut two parapet-walled business buildings that are just outside the Steele Dunning District. The business buildings, contributing structures within the West Side Historic District, are a former repair garage (505-507, 1947, now County Sheriff's Garage) and the City Garage (509-511, 1934). Some harmony is maintained by close placement of all buildings and their similar setback at zero lot line. A downhill view of the downtown, attractively lighted at night, helps establish the context of the Steele Dunning District as a near-downtown residential area.

Also notable, the 700 block of West Third, uphill from West Fourth, features a fine brick Craftsman bungalow (704 West Third, photo# 16), a simpler version in wood next door (708 West Third, photo# 17), and three compatible cottages with bungalow-type limestone porches. 708 West Third Street is non-contributing due to window and roof alterations but its porch relates it to neighboring houses. All but two houses on the other side of West Third turn sideward to the street rather than facing this row of houses in the Steele Dunning District. Properties on West Third Street including addresses 710 and 712 retain brick sidewalks

South Jackson Street is distinguished on both sides of the 200 block by a WPA sidewalk, (contributing but in need of restoration) of mortared, pentagonal and rectangular limestone pavers. Two excellent "double pen" (two-unit) frame houses with porches of Folk Victorian influence are located adjacent, including 521 West Fourth (photo# 12). Behind it at 213 South Jackson (photo# 14) was moved before 1927 from another Jackson Street location.

South Fairview Street, an informal route since the 1920s or earlier, was not opened formally until the 1950s. It has the bucolic, "back-lot" air of having been sparsely built up with converted outbuildings or moved structures set back almost haphazardly from the street. These buildings were followed by several more substantial post-1950 houses, such as the pleasant Traditional



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or weatherboarding (620 and 601-03 West Fourth, photo #1 and 11). Porches of all but 620 West Fourth stand on lattice-covered piers with limestone entry steps. Three were built from identical plans ( [613;1900-1907] photo# 9; [609-607, 1907-1910] photo# 10; [605-603; 1900-1910] photo# 11, and a fourth [621; 1900-1907] photo# 8,) was built from a nearly identical plan reversed. All feature Late Victorian massing--irregular plan; pyramid roof with multiple dropped gables; and multiple porches including square-cornered wrap porch under separate dropped roof--and classical details including pedimented (closed), front-facing gable and Tuscan porch columns. Front-facing gables on 601 -03 and 621 West Fourth Streets (photo# 8 and 11) have diamond vents. Front gables have flared weatherboarding above gable closure. Wrap porches contain two entry doors across the inner front corner and an angled third door at the side terminus of the porch, forming one side of a bay under gable roof. A large window is placed beside the front-facing entry door, and front-facing gables also contain a single window. Side gables project over bays containing pairs of flat windows. A small corner porch at 621 West Fourth has been enclosed, and the side location of entry steps on 601-3 West Fourth Street may not be original.

The outstanding example of Free Classic is 620 West Fourth (photo# 1, 1900-1907). It differs from other examples in the Steele Dunning District by having a round-cornered wrap porch and a three-sided bay (resting on main foundation) whose pitched roof closes the front-facing gable. This house has been restored with a rebuilt porch and is painted buff with cream trim. The lot is enclosed with a picket fence.

## EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN STYLES

In reaction to both Queen Anne elaboration and Classical formality, Craftsman Bungalows (1905-1930) emphasized untreated, natural materials and exposed structural members (McAlester and McAlester 1992, 453-463). House was linked to site, indoors to outdoors, through multiple windows, deep eaves and porches, and overall low, broad proportions. The elegance of Craftsman design precepts was soon engulfed by the popularity of bungalows--inexpensive, easy to build, and easy to fit onto an urban lot-- in a newly expanded housing market dominated by developers (HLFI 1999, xx-xxii). By the time of the Post-

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has square brick piers. Judging by catalog examples, the wood-and-glass porch enclosure may be original. Notable details include full-sized basement windows identical to those of main floor, limestone flowerbox set into closed porch, and basketweave brick course above the limestone foundation.

### Bungalow

Five vernacular Bungalows, without Craftsman pretensions or regional styling, are 522 West Fourth ( present house 1920-1927); 520 West Fourth ( present house 1920-1927); 708 West Third (1910-1913, non-contributing); and 209 South Fairview (photo# 19 circa 1930). 209 South Fairview is a minimal house--possibly a catalog model--with side gable, portico entrance, and 3/1 windows. It only appears in the 1952-53 City Directory (listed as 210-1/2 South Jackson) but probably dates from the 1920s-1930s and was moved recently. The houses at 522 West Fourth and 708 West Third Street are front-gable Bungalows, the former with a nondescript shed-roofed porch, the latter with a handsome random-ashlar limestone porch. The Third Street example is non-contributing due to a second-story addition including shed gable on the side and replacement window in the front gable. The best of these Bungalows is located at 520 West Third, a low-pitched front-gable building with a brick porch and battered wood support piers. It retains symmetrically placed 4/1 windows and has a space next to its one, off-center entry door where a second door might have been placed. Two of the porch piers have been replaced by iron.

One T-plan Cottage, 608 West Fourth (photo# 2, 1898 or earlier, discussed below) was restyled circa 1920 with a 2/3 width limestone porch. With a visually strong front-facing cottage gable and narrow windows and doors, yet dominated by a bungalow-style porch, the house relates the streetscape of cottages on its west to that of bungalows on its east.

### Post-Depression Bungalow

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wooden pattern of alternating diamond-and-dot. The pattern is inspired by pre-Civil-War, primitive German or "country Biedermeier" furniture. Windows are 3/1. A sign on the frieze reading "Jackson Street" indicates that one side of the house (to left as one faces the front facade) may have originally abutted Jackson at another location. The symmetrical facades and post treatments of porches on both houses mark the houses as influenced by the Folk Victorian style (1870-1910; McAlester and McAlester 1992, 309ff).

### Shotgun

The one Shotgun example in the Steele Dunning District, 713 West Fourth (photo# 7, 1926-1927) was originally the typical, Southern form, perhaps derived from Afro-Caribbean models: a row of rooms stacked front-to-back along the lot (McAlester and McAlester 1992, 90). It has a front-facing gable, shed-roofed porch with gabled portico, and side and rear additions. The porch has recently been remodeled with turned posts, balusters, and railings. The house is shown in the 1977 Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory photograph with spindlework porch frieze, now missing. This house may also have been moved into this infilled block of West Fourth. The house retains a tall, narrow, front window known to correspond to its original appearance, also a tall, narrow, 2/2 west window that is original or historical.

### T-plan Cottage

Six T-plan cottages form the most common vernacular house type in the Steele Dunning District as in other neighborhoods in Bloomington and elsewhere (HLFI 1999, "Gable-front," xix). All have front-facing gables plus one side and one rear gable. Five that date from about 1900 have suffered loss of detail, mostly through replacement cladding and porch materials, that might have allowed them to be classed as Queen Anne. (See discussion of 600 West Fourth above.) The sixth, 210 South Jackson (1950) is a nondescript example except for 3/1 windows and was probably moved, with additions, from another site.

The five early cottages, all on West Fourth, (612; 1898 or earlier); (608; 1898 or earlier); (705; 1920-1927 in present location); (519; 1900-1907, non-contributing); and (517; 1900-1907). 612, 705, and 517 West Fourth have steeply pitched, front-facing,

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The Minimal Traditional style (circa 1935-1950), with its dominant front-facing gable and simple one-story form, creates a transition from pre-World-War-II Tudor Revival to postwar Ranch (McAlester and McAlester 1992, 477-478; HLF 1999, xxii). Two Minimal Traditional houses are located on West Third Street at 618 (1948-1950) and 616 (1945-1946). 618 West Third is cross-gabled with brick-trimmed entry door and a stoop under a front-gabled portico. The entry is flanked by a 2/2, horizontally divided double window on the left as focus, and a small 2/2 kitchen window on the right. 618 West Third is Sears catalog house #215, variously known as "The Berwyn" (1929-1933) and "The Mayfield" (1933-1939; Stevenson and Jandl 1986, 215). It is a cross-gabled house with unusual arched corner entry cut into the front gable on the wall plane, without trim or projection. The original, weatherboarded corner post has been replaced with iron, and wall cladding is now vinyl. A double window to the left of the door and a single window to the right are 6/6. The building sits on a foundation of rock-faced limestone. Given its date of appearance on the site, 6 or 7 years after the model last appeared, this house too may have been moved from another location.

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

#### SUMMARY

The Steele Dunning Historic District, containing 33 houses and two contributing sections of historic sidewalk, consists largely of the part of Prospect Hill neighborhood that formerly lay within the original Paris Dunning tract. The Paris Dunning House, an individually nominated National Register building, forms part of the original Prospect Hill National Register District, thus linking the original district historically and geographically to the adjacent area. Architectural styles, predominantly Free Classic, Pyramidal-roofed Vernacular, and Craftsman Bungalow, relate the Steele Dunning District to grander examples of the same styles found in adjacent Prospect Hill. Most of the Steele Dunning Historic District developed later than surrounding neighborhoods, as the Paris Dunning parcel was inherited and developed piecemeal. In addition, the northern and eastern edges of the Steele Dunning District represent an early, transitional area between in-town urban development before the turn of the century and the somewhat separate development of the formerly outlying Prospect Hill District.

The Steele Dunning District is eligible for National Register district nomination under criteria A and C for its local significance in architecture, community planning and development, and industry. Additionally, over a period of significance circa 1898-1950, the Steele Dunning District illustrates the evolving visual ideal of single-family, owner-occupied housing (architecture). In terms of community development, the Steele Dunning District illustrates changing economic and architectural strategies for reconciling this ideal with purpose-built rental housing that captured the investor opportunities and housing needs of a lower-income housing market. The Steele Dunning District is also significant to community development as a late-developing enclave of speculative development created by the presence of an estate-sized parcel within an urban grid. Last, the Steele Dunning District adds to urban industrial history as a residential location of choice for lower-paid workers in the limestone industry circa 1910, when numerous quarry operations, not yet consolidated, were located along the Morton Street railroad alignment only one block west of the area's eastern edge (industry).

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Bloomington's founders came from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, and the city remains embedded in a region of Appalachian-influenced culture with its predilection for mixed small farming even on marginal land and its landscape of tiny settlements anchored by evangelical churches and extended-family graveyards. At first a deeply isolated farm service center, Bloomington came to be shaped physically and economically by the presence of an embryo state university (Indiana Seminary, 1825, renamed a college in 1829 and university in 1848), by the coming of the New Albany and Salem Railroad (1854, soon followed by others), and by the state's turn to manufacturing in the industrial aftermath of the Civil War. The region's great hardwood forests and rich limestone deposits, and a railroad alignment running north-south through the middle of Bloomington, set the stage for two leading industries and employers among the city's 40-odd manufacturers circa 1900: furniture making and limestone production.

Within the Steele Dunning area, employment conditions and real-estate purchase arrangements, changing throughout the area's period of significance 1898-1950, affected patterns of rental and ownership. After about 1907, the most widespread and direct influence on the layout and architecture of the Steele Dunning District was speculative building by Permelia and Henry Steele. Mrs. Steele inherited a portion of the original Paris Dunning parcel and, with her husband, owned it until their deaths in 1930 and 1934 respectively. Contexts of significance for the Steele Dunning District are derived from the time periods before, during, and after subdivision of the Dunning-Steele property. Each period embodies a stage in the development of one or more areas of significance in architecture, community development, and industry.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

1. Regional roots and "village" life at the turn of the century

The Steele Dunning District circa 1898, when its houses first appeared on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, showed clear connections to the region's 19th century character. Appalachian ancestry of many residents and the presence of a pre-1900,

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available job descriptions, these workers had not secured a significant tie to local manufacturing establishments or the railroad in spite of the importance of these to the local economy. Reflecting southern Indiana's Appalachian derivation, over one-third of residents' parents (but only one resident) came from Kentucky, Tennessee, or North Carolina. At the 1905 death of the saloon keeper, Daniel A. "Bud" Stout (522 West Fourth), a well known Bloomingtonian whose birthday party was once reported in the newspaper, a *Bloomington Telephone* obituary (26 Dec 05) felt called upon to reconcile Stout's good community standing with his controversial occupation as a seller of spirits.

2. Extractive Industry, Urban Growth, and the Urban Look, 1907-1913

From 1887 to 1900, the Indiana limestone industry had grown at a rate "unprecedented in American industrial history" (McDonald 1995, page 22). The industry's quick capture of its potential market was particularly remarkable, McDonald notes, for the fact that limestone was produced in an extremely small and concentrated geographical region, chiefly small areas of Monroe and Lawrence counties. Growth of Bloomington's population and urbanization of Monroe County were especially intense between 1890 and 1900, probably in response to employment opportunities in limestone as well as the ever-growing Showers Brothers Company furniture factory and numerous other industrial establishments. These opportunities led to a demand for housing resulting in the construction of 652 dwellings, an increase of over 40 percent, between 1900 and 1910. For most of Bloomington's work force circa 1910, however, jobs were poorly paid and insecure, as reflected by the high number of multi-worker households in the Steele Dunning District. Besides a large minority of limestone workers, the area's work force featured a variety of occupations including building trades (4) and a full 20 percent (5) who were female service workers. It is probable both that rents were high and that wages were low.

Bloomington's Sanborn map of 1913 listed and mapped some 20 stone quarries and mills located along an 8-10 mile stretch of the north-south railroad alignment on Morton Street, one block east of the Steele Dunning District and one block west of the county courthouse. Railroad spurs served each quarry and mill site, and railroads ran special morning and evening workers'

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Three are in the 600 block on the south side of West Fourth (621, 613, and 601-603) and one outside the Steele Dunning District on Third and Jackson. All four lots, and a fifth adjacent (605-607, photo# 4) that was still owned by the Steeles, were built on between 1900 and 1910. Three of the houses (601-613) were identical and the fourth (621), perhaps first to be built, was slightly smaller with a reversed plan. The style was Free Classic, massed and detailed similarly to survey (620) across the street, but with a squared corner porch instead of rounded. It is probable that the Steeles had sold the three lots south of Fourth on contract, as they would do again later with other parts of the parcel. But all four of the houses were rentals. 601-613 West Fourth were clearly built for occupancy by two households and were occupied by two households from their construction. These three houses featured two separate entry doors inconspicuously and asymmetrically placed across an inner porch corner within the expansive, asymmetrical facade. The effect of the whole was of a substantial, one-family cottage, and at least two of these duplexes were rented by higher-income limestone workers. The original inspiration for the two-entry layout was almost certainly the T-plan cottages of the 1890s. The double-entry plan may have been intended originally to provide separate formal and family entrances, but the distinction of the Free Classic group on West Fourth was that the plan was used with two-household rental in mind, rather than adapted later to such use. This approach, which was also used in other unsurveyed West Side neighborhoods, conformed to the prevailing ideal of single-family residence, preferably in a cottage on its own grounds. In the Fourth Street houses, a level of status associated with owning a "styled," apparently single-family home could be derived from a two-household rental, thus conferring maximum benefit on both landlord and tenant. When the Steeles built two more cottages between 1914 and 1920 at 712 and 710 West Third on the southern edge of their property, the model was again an asymmetrical facade with two cornered entry doors. But the identical cottages were apparently not meant as investment rentals, and their Bungalow-influenced limestone porches suggest that the Late Victorian cottage ideal had come to an end in the Steele Dunning District area.

3. A Little Bungalow of Our Own: Corporate Consolidation, Social Class, and Housing Speculation, 1920-1950



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During the 1920s, however, the 700 block of West Fourth and the Paris Dunning parcel began to house a more modestly circumstanced group. The Steele Dunning District as a whole continued to contain a higher proportion of renters, about three-fourths, than Bloomington generally. But it is not clear that the Steeles intended to act only as landlords. Evidence shows a contract sale for 713 West Fourth (1926-1927) and 706 West Third (1928-1930) respectively, which were apparently built and then sold by the Steeles. Several residents of Steele property (715 West Fourth, 712, 710 and 704 West Third) are described in city directories and the U. S. census as buying with a mortgage. If so, this instrument must have been a contract in favor of the Steeles, since the "mortgaged" properties mentioned were part of the subdivision put up for sale the year after Henry Steele's death in 1934.

The Steeles' ownership of a large parcel combined with the relatively insecure employment of some purchasers, and most renters, had consequences both architecturally and economically. After the early creation of six or more striking houses (mentioned in the preceding section), most houses built on Steele land during the 1920s have an improvised quality. They serve as reminders that a wildcat building market existed in the 1920s and 1930s, side by side with the development of the first mass-built subdivisions. Many low-income owners resorted to building their own houses from parts or even scrap, or buying pre-built houses of modest quality. Self-build housing has not yet been extensively documented in Bloomington, but may be found when the areas west and south of the Steele Dunning District are surveyed.

Would-be owners in the self-build market would not have had income that was sufficient, or sufficiently steady, to qualify for the newer type of amortizable, long-term mortgage dependent on regular monthly payments. Rather, they resorted to contracts with individuals such as the Steeles. Contracts were an avenue to home ownership, and their rate of repossession may not have been higher (or lower) than that of amortizable loans. But what was purchased varied more widely in quality than was the case with a bank or saving-and-loan sponsored mortgage. Minority-group members such as Hispanics and African-Americans have

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### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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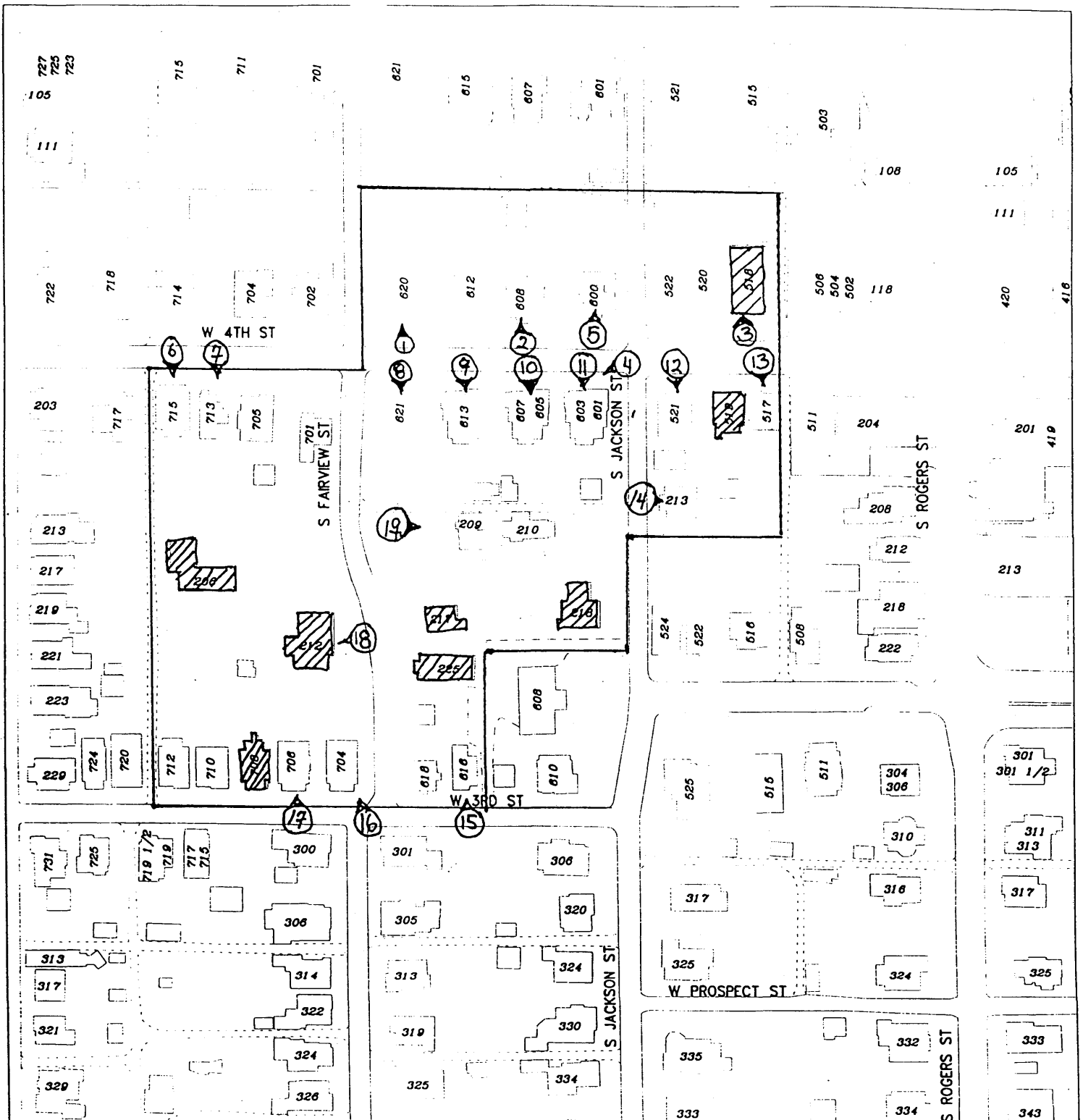
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### 10. Boundary Description

Beginning at the northeast corner of South Fairview and West Fourth Street and proceeding along the east curb line of South Fairview north to its intersection with the south property line of an east west running alley. Then proceeding east along said south property line to its intersection with the west property line of a north south running alley lying east of 518 West Fourth Street. Then proceeding south along the west property line of said alley to its intersection with the south property line of 213 South Jackson Street. Then proceeding west along said property line to its intersection with the west curb line of South Jackson Street. From this point proceeding south along said west curb line to its intersection with the south property line of 218 South Jackson. From this point continuing west along said property line to its intersection with the west property line of a north south running alley. From this point turning south along said alley and proceeding to its intersection with the north curb of West Third Street. From this point turning west and proceeding along the north curb of Third Street to its intersection with the east curb of a north south running alley. From this point proceeding north along the east property line of the alley to its intersection with the south curb of West Fourth Street, then proceeding east to the intersection of east curb of South Fairview then turning north to the point of beginning.



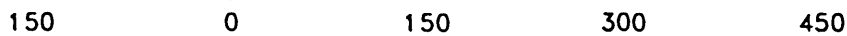
Steele-Dunning Historic District

Photo-Documentation

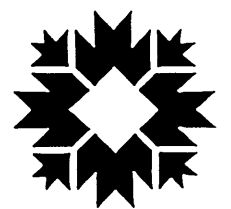
Non-Contributing Properties are Hatched

By: hiestann

7 Feb 00



N



Scale: 1" = 150'

For reference only; map information NOT warranted.