

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received NOV 3 1982  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic University Heights Historic District

and/or common N/A

**2. Location** Roughly bounded by Regent, Allen, Lathrop Sts., and Kendall

Ave., (both sides)

street & number various - see district map

not for publication

city, town Madison

vicinity of

congressional district

Second

state Wisconsin

code 55

county

Dane

code 025

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name please see individual inventory forms

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dane County Register of Deeds

street & number 210 Monona Avenue

city, town

Madison

state

WI 53709

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1973

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison

state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

### I. General Description

The section of the City of Madison known as University Heights was platted as a residential suburb in 1893 and is located  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of the center of the city, just outside the city boundaries at that time. University Heights (more commonly known as "The Heights") has long been considered one of Madison's most distinguished residential neighborhoods, an area noted for its many residences of architectural significance and also for its historic association with the large numbers of prominent faculty members of the adjacent University of Wisconsin who have traditionally made the Heights their home. University Heights takes its name from the glacial drumlin which rises from the center of the suburb which is adjacent to, and overlooking, the University of Wisconsin. The plat plan of the Heights is superimposed over this steeply sloping hill which rises to a height of 1,060 feet, some 200 feet above the surrounding area, and which provides magnificent views of Madison and the surrounding Four-Lakes region. Streets and lots are laid out in a manner sensitive to the topography of the site with rectilinear streets paralleling the perimeter of the plat at the base of the hill giving way to a more organic, curvilinear plan as one approaches the summit. Lot sizes are greatest on or near the summit and decrease somewhat in size as one approaches the periphery of the plat. The crown of the hill, having the best views and the largest lots, has attracted the largest and most significant houses as well as clients secure enough professionally to afford them. Those buildings having the greatest historical and architectural significance are most heavily concentrated on the curvilinear streets of Arlington Place, Ely Place, Prospect Avenue, Summit Avenue and Roby Road, all of which surround the crown of the Heights.

As one descends the hill one finds an increasing number of buildings of somewhat smaller size occupying the smaller lots around the base of the hill. This is especially true to the North and East along Kendall Avenue and Lathrop Street. The crowded feeling that is perceived in the lowest portions of the Heights is accentuated by the topography which enables the viewer to see more structures at a glance than would be true of a more conventional site and plan. This density is unrelieved by parks or other open spaces common to many other curvilinear suburbs of the time. This may be accounted for by the developers' wish to maximize their profits coupled with the very real difficulty of introducing what would have been considered a suitable park at that time into such difficult terrain. The only open spaces that do occur are the playground adjoining Randall School and the half-block size grounds of the Bradley and Olin Houses.

The difficulty of placing rectangular houses onto steep, curving lots has given rise to a variety of site lines and setback plans which designers of individual buildings have often used to their advantage. In general, houses on the same side of the street are uniformly setback but in streets which transverse the more precipitous parts of the Heights, such as Arlington Place, houses on the uphill side of the street may be set back 40 to 100 feet while those on the downhill side only 10 to 20 feet. This has allowed builders in some instances to create houses having the illusion of considerable size by placing them some distance uphill from the street. It has also allowed builders to disguise the mass of others by placing them on the downhill side where only two of four stories may show from the street.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		Association with historic personages

**Specific dates** 1893 to present      **Builder/Architect** (see individual survey forms)

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

I. Introduction

The University Heights district is important to the history and architectural development of the City of Madison because of its place in that history as Madison's first elite residential suburb. The Heights has traditionally been home to some of the most distinguished members of the faculty of the adjacent University of Wisconsin. Many of these men and women were important locally for their roles in the history and development of the University and of the City and are important nationally for their roles in the intellectual history of the nation. The houses that these men and women built for themselves were often the products of the finest local and midwestern architects of the time and their survival as a group has preserved them as an anthology of the residential design available to members of a progressive middle class in the early decades of the twentieth century in the midwest.

II. Historical Development

In March of 1893 the longtime owner of the land, Breese J. Stevens, sold his 106 acre property located just outside the western boundary of Madison to the newly formed University Heights Company for \$53,000. Prior to this date Stevens, a prominent corporation lawyer, Mayor of Madison in 1884 and president of the Madison Land and Lumber Company and the Monona Land Company, had, along with other members of his family in New York State, owned this parcel as far back as 1856 along with considerable acreage elsewhere on the west side of Madison. After the eastern half of the property was logged for firewood in 1862-1863 the land remained half woods and half pasture until 1893 when the parcel was sold. Stevens' reasons for selling at this time are conjectural but three factors certainly influenced his decision. The creation of the suburb of South Madison in 1889 had begun the first movement of population away from the increasingly crowded and expensive downtown area of the city. Coincidental with this movement was the formation of the Madison City Railways Company, which by 1893 was being extended westward to serve the new suburbs. Rumors concerning the extension of these newly electrified lines to areas in proximity with Stevens' land were published in local papers and were confirmed on May 21, 1893. Thirdly, the University of Wisconsin's attempt to purchase the adjacent area of Camp Randall for future expansion in late 1892 probably acted as a catalyst to the development of the Heights. Stevens, a member of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents since 1891, was certainly well aware of this circumstance. When legislative approval for the purchase was granted on April 14, 1893, Stevens had already sold out to the University Heights Company.

The principal officers in the University Heights Company were William T. Fish and Burr W. Jones. William T. Fish, president and treasurer, was a prominent contractor and a pioneer in suburban development in Madison. As president of the Madison Land Improvement Company he had platted and developed the nearby suburb of Wingra Park in 1892. Burr W. Jones, secretary, was one of Madison most prominent attorneys. Besides his extensive practice, he was Dane County District Attorney, 1873-1877; and would later become an Associate Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The curvilinear plat these men

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 101.42 acres

Quadrangle name Madison-West, WI

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

**UMT References**

A 

1	6	3	0	3	3	9	5	4	7	7	1	5	8	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

B 

1	6	3	0	3	4	8	0	4	7	7	1	5	7	5
Zone	Easting						Northing							

C 

1	6	3	0	3	4	7	5	4	7	7	1	3	7	5
Zone	Easting						Northing							

D 

1	6	3	0	3	3	9	0	4	7	7	1	3	8	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

E 

1	6	3	0	3	3	8	5	4	7	7	0	9	8	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

F 

1	6	3	0	2	6	7	5	4	7	7	0	9	8	5
Zone	Easting						Northing							

G 

1	6	3	0	2	6	9	0	4	7	7	1	4	5	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

H 

1	6	3	0	3	3	9	5	4	7	7	1	5	3	5
Zone	Easting						Northing							

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

Please see continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Timothy Heggland, Preservation Assistant

organization Madison Landmarks Commission date March, 1981

street & number 215 Monona Avenue telephone 608-266-6523

city or town Madison state WI 53710

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Richard Mauer

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date 10/27/82

**For HCERS use only**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Thomas Dreyer date 12/7/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

Rec'd  
MAR 13  
4-6-82

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Corrections to Individual Survey Forms

- 1937 Arlington Place      The "Style" under "Description" should be "development of the early Prairie School." Similarly, under "Determination of Significance," the first sentence should read, "The Balthasar H. Meyer house is a good example of the early development of the Prairie School style of architecture in the Midwest."
- 101 Ely Place              Under "Determination of Significance," the word "true" should be deleted from the first sentence.
- 120 Ely Place              Under "Previous Owners," the correct spelling of Mrs. Howard F. Weiss's first name is "Nelle," not "Nellie."
- 1811 Kendall Avenue      Under "Determination of Significance," the first sentence should read, "The Hillyer house is notable for the excellence of its architecture, a pure example of the shingle style in Madison."
- 106 N. Prospect Ave.      Under "Historic Name" the Roman numeral "I" after Harold C. Bradley house should be deleted.
- 137 N. Prospect Ave.      Under "Architect" the present language should be replaced by "George W. Maher, Chicago, and Claude and Starck, Madison, in association." Under "Historical Data," it should be noted that Edward Elliott later became president of Purdue University.
- 168 N. Prospect Ave.      Under "Description," the style should be corrected to read "Developing Prairie School with Tudor elements."
- 1802 Regent St.            Under "Description," style should be corrected to read, "Developing Prairie School."

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7. Description (continued) Page 1

Originally, the slopes of the Heights were covered with large oak trees. In 1862-1863 the entire eastern half of the Heights were logged over for firewood by soldiers from the adjacent Civil War Training grounds at Camp Randall. For the next thirty years the land was half open pasture and half oaks. When construction began in 1894, building growth occurred in two separate areas; large, impressive homes of University faculty just below the summit of the Heights to the east, and smaller, vernacular houses along the base of the hill to the north on University Avenue. As the new suburb gained in reputation, increasing numbers of substantial houses encircled the summit and eventually covered most of the center and westernmost parts of the plat while smaller houses filled in the areas to the north and east at the base of the hill. As the streets were paved, rows of elm trees were planted and by 1930, when the suburb was essentially complete, a uniform tree story covered the Heights. It was only in the early 1970s that Dutch Elm disease destroyed the elm population leaving the plant cover much as it had been before development began.

II. Building Types

The buildings which have been placed on this challenging and inviting site constitute Madison's first elite residential suburb. University Heights is composed of 29 blocks divided into 440 lots holding a total of 400 buildings. Of these buildings, 346 are single family houses while another 43 are multi-family apartment buildings and the remaining eleven include two churches, one school and eight commercial buildings, of which five have living space in the second floor. Construction started in 1894 and was 95% completed by 1930 so that, stylistically, the Heights begins with the late Queen Anne and Shingle styles of the 1890s and extends through the Period Revival styles in vogue in the 1920s. The most architecturally significant group is the large number of Craftsmen and Prairie style houses built between 1900 and 1916, a group which culminates in two houses of international reputation: the Gilmore house (NRHP) by Frank Lloyd Wright and the Bradley house (NHL) by Louis Sullivan. When we speak of the Heights as an "elite" suburb it needs to be understood that we are speaking of an elite based on education and professional attainments rather than an elite based on money; the houses that this group built for itself reflects this. Buildings range in size from 1½ story bungalows to 20 room mansions with the majority being in the eight to twelve room range. The houses in the Heights which have an aspect of monumentality usually achieve it on the basis of proportions and careful siting. The materials used tend to be natural ones such as stained or painted wood, deep red and brown brick, random ashlar stone, shingles and painted and unpainted stucco. Colors range from white through deep red, but earth tones and the natural colors of the materials used predominate. Decorative elements tend to be simple; a tendency which is especially appropriate to the simple massing of design elements that frequently occurs in buildings done in the Craftsmen and Prairie styles and which work equally well in the regional interpretations of the Period Revival styles which succeed them. The lack of ostentatiousness belies the high quality of craftsmanship and design in evidence in many of these buildings. This may reflect characteristics of design and construction which had an intrinsic esthetic appeal to those who commissioned these buildings. However, it is more than likely that economy of design reflects economy of means. University professors at the time were characteristically people with modest means who could afford space but not elaborate decoration and expensive and opulent building materials.

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In keeping with the high status that University Heights has always enjoyed, maintenance has generally been conducted on a very high level and, as a result, restoration/rehabilitation activities today are largely confined to the efforts of individual owners renewing, rather than restoring their buildings. The Heights has been fortunate in being able to attract succeeding generations of owners sensitive to their own and their neighbors' buildings. Virtually all of the buildings in the Heights designated as pivotal retain their original appearance. Alterations to street facades have been kept to a minimum with the most common change being the winterizing of one-and two-story screened and open sleeping porches.

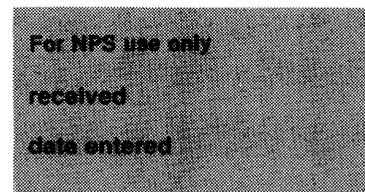
The overwhelming majority of buildings are used for the purpose for which they were originally built. As a result the Heights presents an appearance today remarkably like the one it presented 50 years ago.

III. Archeological Potential

Mention is made in the Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. II, No. 1, of the University Heights Group of Indian mounds consisting of 1 conical and 3 linear mounds, all of which were extent in 1908 when Charles E. Brown of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin surveyed their location in Block 16, Lots 3-6 and Block 17, Lots 1-5. All of these remnants of the Mound Building Culture were subsequently destroyed by street grading and excavation for homesites as attested to in a letter to Brown from Prof. Ralph Linton, dated Jan. 9, 1936 and on file in the Charles E. Brown papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin Archeological Division. No other mention of archeological remains in the Heights has been found, including the extensive updating of information available in the Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places, and the likelihood of any such remains having survived the subsequent development of the Heights intact would seem to be extremely doubtful.

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8. Significance (corrections)

I. Introduction

The first sentence should read, "The University Heights district is important to the history and architectural development of the city of Madison because of its place in that history as an early, elite residential suburb."

II. Historical Development

Continuation Sheet, page 2: The second paragraph should be revised to begin as follows:

The Prairie School was the most significant architectural style to originate in the Midwest. Based on concepts first formulated by Louis H. Sullivan and expanded upon by Frank Lloyd Wright, the Prairie School aimed at nothing less than the rethinking of architectural design and was an attempt to give American architecture a more modern and uniquely American expression. University Heights has two nationally known houses, one by Sullivan and the other by Wright, as well as numerous houses designed by Louis W. Claude and Alvan E. Small, local architects who had worked in Sullivan's office prior to starting their practices in Madison.

Continuation Sheet, page 3: The last sentence under the description of Louis H. Sullivan should be revised to read as follows: "Built with major contributions from his chief draftsman at the time, George Elmslie, the Bradley house was one of Sullivan's late commissions."

Continuation Sheet, page 4: In the paragraph describing Claude and Starck three changes are proper:

- a. The dates in the phrase "From 1891-1896 he worked in several Chicago offices..." are incorrect and should be changed simply to read, "In the early 1890s he worked in several Chicago offices..."
- b. The dates for Edward Starck are properly: "(1868-1947)."
- c. The phrase "Prairie style" in the fifth sentence should be changed to read, "Prairie School."

In the paragraph describing Alvan E. Small, the phrase "his schooling" should be changed to read "high school."

Continuation Sheet, page 7. The historical themes relating to the University Heights historic district are not comprehensively detailed here. "Law," for example, would be relevant as well, but is not listed.

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8. Significance, (continued), Page 1

adopted for University Heights, the first curvilinear plat design in Madison, was designed by local surveyor and civil engineer McClellan Dodge. Replete with streets named after past University presidents it was put on the market on May 14, 1893 and became an immediate success. By May 28th, half the lots had been sold and the boom was only halted by news of numerous failures of regional and state banks which heralded the financial panic of 1893. The panic had a dampening affect on land sales and building in Madison till the end of the century.

Tradition has it that the first sale of land in the new suburb was to Professor Richard T. Ely, nationally famous economist. The first house built was the large, elaborate Queen Anne style house of Attorney Charles E. Buell, built in 1894 on the crown of the Heights. A measure of the pioneering aspect of this move away from the center of town is that Buell's house became popularly known as "Buell's Folly", a name by which it was known long after the suburb grew up around it. The years 1894-1900 saw the erection of fifteen more houses which fall into two groups; nine small, veracular style houses built by University farmworkers and self-employed tradesmen along the northern perimeter of the plat and six, large, eclectically styled houses built by university faculty members on the eastern slope of the hill. Growth was slow due to poor economic conditions and the lack of city services, which were finally installed in 1903 when the suburb was annexed by the City of Madison. The real growth of University Heights dates from this year. Between 1900-1907; twenty eight structures were built, including the first portion of Randall School; 1908-1914 saw another eighty six buildings; 1915-1921, fifty; 1922-1928, one hundred and eighty six; 1929-1935, seventeen and 1935-1941, seven. When University Heights was first platted, suburban living was still very much an experiment and the new suburban developments of the time were viewed by most of Madison's elite as little more than wilderness areas or speculative ventures. Not until the practical problems of money supply, transportation and city services were solved did suburban living became viewed as an attractive alternative to downtown living. And it was the example of people of social and intellectual distinction living a comfortable existence in the new suburb of University Heights that persuaded the downtown elite to begin leaving the city for the suburbs and thus made the whole process fashionable.

The Heights, as the first suburb to employ a topographically sensitive, curvilinear street plan, set the pattern for all the elite suburbs that were to follow. Almost without exception the elite suburbs that came into being after the Heights featured this type of planning, including Nakoma (1915-16), Shorewood Hills (1913), Lakewood (1912), and the Highlands (1911).

III. Architecture

The thirty-five year period between 1893 and 1928 that spans the major development of the University Heights district also spans one of the most important periods in modern architectural history; the rise and fall of the Progressive Era in midwestern architecture. The architectural significance of the University Heights district lies in the opportunity it affords the student of architectural history to study an entire suburb built during this seminal period, whose individual buildings are one of the more important legacies from that time and which reflect the important stylistic differences between turn of the century architects. Here, within the space of a few blocks can be seen the eclectic historicism of the Queen Anne style being supplanted by the several progressive styles,

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8. Significance (Continued), Page 2

which in turn were supplanted by the more academic historicism that marked the Period Revival styles which followed.

University Heights is rich in fine examples from all three periods but it is best known for the buildings in the Prairie, Craftsman and Bungalow styles. All three of these progressive styles came into being around the turn of the century as part of a conscious attempt to design buildings suited to the new century, unburdened by past historical references. As such they shared certain conceptual similarities; rejection of historical precedent as a basis of design; use of natural materials displayed in a way that emphasized the natural characteristics of the materials rather than disguised them; simple geometric shapes defining the building coupled with openness in interior planning; and ornamentation expressive of the structure of the building.

The Prairie style was the most significant architectural style to originate in the midwest. Based on concepts first formulated by Louis H. Sullivan and promulgated and expanded upon by his brilliant employee, Frank Lloyd Wright, the Prairie style aimed at nothing less than the rethinking of architectural design and was an attempt to give American architecture a more modern and a uniquely American expression. University Heights has two nationally known houses by both Sullivan and Wright as well as numerous houses designed by Louis W. Claude and Alvan E. Small, local architects who received their training in Sullivan's Chicago office. These houses range in size and importance from Sullivan's great house for Professor Harold C. Bradley which, at a cost of \$40,000, was the most expensive house ever built in the Heights, to the modest house designed by Alvan Small for Professor Aaron G. Johnson at 1713 Chadbourne Avenue. The difference in size and elaboration between the two houses is expressive of the aspirations of proponents of the Prairie style who were as willing to design cottages as they were mansions, out of a belief that the basic principles of the style had applicability to all phases of the built environment. University Heights offers the possibility of studying buildings representing the highest expression of the Prairie style as well as an opportunity to see excellent regional expressions of the style in the hands of local practitioners.

The Craftsman and Bungalow styles were essentially builders' styles and were almost exclusively residential in their application. They appealed primarily to members of the middle class and because of the simplicity of their design and decoration frequently represented a cheaper alternative to buildings in more traditional styles. Consequently, they were ideally suited to the pocketbooks of University faculty members who were often able to build houses of considerable size in the Heights by taking advantage of the favorable cost-per-square-foot ratio that buildings in these styles enjoyed. It is probably this factor more than any other which accounts for the very large number of buildings in the Heights built in these styles.

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8. Significance, (Continued), Page 3

University Heights is best known today as the site of two outstanding works by the most important of all midwestern architects: Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. However, Sullivan and Wright are only the most prominent names on the long list of identified architects whose work constitutes approximately one-third of all buildings in the Heights. The architects whose names appear most frequently on building permits in the Heights are the most important local architects of the period, men who produced some of their best and most characteristic work for this elite clientele. These architects may be grouped as late Victorian designers (Conover and Porter), Prairie School architects (Claude and Starck, and Alvan Small) and those designing in the various styles of the Period Revival (Law, Law and Potter, and Frank M. Riley).

Conover and Porter was probably the most important firm in Madison in the 1890s. Allan D. Conover (1854-1929) was born in Madison, received a degree in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin in 1874 and from 1879-1890 was Professor of civil engineering at the same institution. In 1884 he became involved in the designing and rebuilding of Science Hall (NRHP) on the university campus. One of his students and an assistant on the project was Frank Lloyd Wright who got his first taste of actual building construction at this time. In 1885 Conover associated with Lew R. Porter (1862-1918) and their partnership lasted until 1897. Porter studied civil engineering at the University of Wisconsin. Together they designed most frequently in the Richardsonian Romanesque and the Shingle styles and they quickly developed a practice that spread over the entire state, especially in the Ashland area where they maintained a branch office. The bulk of their practice was made up of institutional buildings but they also had a substantial residential practice in Madison. Their house for Attorney Charles E. Buell at 115 Ely Place (1894) was the first important house in the Heights and is their only documented house there. This is due to the absence of building permits before 1914 but it is probable that they had other work in the Heights as well in the early days of its development.

Louis H. Sullivan (1856-1924) is one of the most important architects in American history. Sullivan's importance centers around his designs for "skyscrapers" built in Chicago and elsewhere in the last decades of the 19th century for which work he has often been called "the father of modern architecture". No less important than his buildings, his office became a training ground for a whole generation of architects who would go on to develop the Prairie School style. Louis W. Claude, Alvan E. Small and especially Frank Lloyd Wright would all pass through this great office. Sullivan's house for Professor Harold C. Bradley at 101 N. Prospect Avenue (NHL), is one of Sullivan's very rare domestic designs. Built with major contributions from his chief draftsman at the time, George Elmslie, the Bradley house was one of Sullivan's best and last commissions.

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867?-1959) has often been called the greatest of all American architects. His work in the creation of the Prairie School style alone would have secured his place in history but this was only the first step in the evolution of his concept of an organic architecture which would make him the most famous architect of his time. He attended the University of Wisconsin briefly and his training began with construction of Science Hall for Allan D. Conover in Madison. By 1888 he was working with Adler and Sullivan in Chicago and by 1893 he had started his own

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8. Significance (Continued), Page 4

office. His single house in the Heights, built for Professor Eugene A. Gilmore (120 Ely Place) in 1908 (NRHP), is an excellent example of Wrights' mature Prairie style.

Claude and Starck were both born in Wisconsin in 1868. Louis W. Claude (1868-1952) attended the University of Wisconsin in civil engineering 1889-91 during which time he worked in the offices of Conover and Porter. From 1891-1896 he worked in several Chicago offices including Burnham and Root, and Adler and Sullivan before returning to Madison. Edward F. Starck (1868- ) was born in Milwaukee and educated in Madison. Before joining Claude in partnership he worked with several architectural firms including E.T. Mix and Company in Milwaukee and Handy and Cady in Chicago. The firm of Claude and Starck was formed in 1898 and soon became Madison's leading practitioner in the Prairie style. They are probably best known today for their important series of small libraries done in that style including one in Evansville, WI (NRHP) but they also had an extensive residential practice as well. While the total number in the Heights is not known, at least four Claude and Starck designs have been identified, of which the houses for Professor Balthazar H. Meyer at 1937 Arlington Place and for Professor Edward A. Ross at 2021 are especially noteworthy.

Alvan E. Small (1869-1932) entered the offices of Conover and Porter in 1887 after completing his schooling. He worked with the firm until 1899 when he went to Chicago and worked for Louis H. Sullivan. He returned to Madison in the following year to form a partnership with Lew F. Porter. This association lasted until 1907 when Small went on his own. Small is best known today for his numerous smaller houses done in the Prairie style, including the Louis Hersig house at 1010 Sherman Avenue. (NRHP). Again, lack of building permits before 1914 limits knowledge of the extent of his buildings in University Heights but nine have been positively identified including such excellent examples as his houses for Professor Charles E. Allen, 2014 Chamberlain Avenue, (1911); Thomas S. Morris, 1815 Summit Avenue (1910-1911); and Professor Aaron G. Johnson, 1713 Chadbourne Avenue (1913).

Law, Law and Potter was the most successful firm in Madison between 1920 and 1940. Their practice was notable in terms of both size and quality and was marked by the equal felicity with which the partners managed all the major styles of the Period Revival and yet could move easily into the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles which became increasingly popular in the 1930s. James R. Law (1895-1952) was born in Madison. He worked in the offices of Claude and Starck from about 1901-1906 when he left to attend the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture. Upon graduation he worked in the office of the State Architect of Wisconsin, Arthur C. Peabody, until starting his own firm in 1914. He was shortly joined by his brother, Edward J. Law and in 1925, took in his senior draftsman, Ellis C. Potter, as his second partner. The 34 identified houses by this firm are the largest group in University Heights designed by a single firm and include the houses of both James Law at 101 N. Prospect Avenue and Edward Law at 111 N. Allen Street. These houses were executed in every major motif of the Period Revival. The best of them are the Tudor Revival houses of James Law, Milton Findorff at 1832 Summit Avenue (1927), and W. F. Winterble at 2131 Van Hise Avenue (1930); and the Colonial Revival parsonage of the First Congregational Church at 121 Bascom Place (1925).

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8. Significance (Continued), Page 5

Frank M. Riley (1875-1948) was born in Madison, studied civil engineering at the University of Wisconsin from 1895-1897 and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1900. He worked in various Boston firms until 1911 when he left for Europe, not returning to Madison until 1915 when he began his own practice. Riley was perhaps the ablest practitioner in the Period Revival styles in Madison and many of Madison's finest residences and commercial and institutional buildings in these styles came from his hand. There are thirteen identified houses by Riley in University Heights including the superb Tudor Revival style house for R. W. Harris at 8 N. Prospect Avenue (1923), and the equally distinguished Colonial Revival style house of H. O. Moore at 220 N. Prospect Avenue (1923).

IV. Associations with Historic Personages

The era between 1890 and 1920 in the mid-west has often been called "The Progressive Era" and no place was more closely identified with that period than Madison and the University of Wisconsin. Prof. Robert C. Nesbit in his book, Wisconsin: A History, states that "Wisconsin (was) a laboratory of democracy and the University an energizing agency of progressive reform...". Frederick C. Howe, in his influential book, Wisconsin, An Experiment in Democracy, went further, to say that: "The University is largely responsible for the progressive legislation that has made Wisconsin so widely known as a pioneer." Nationally, it was a time of intellectual vigor which saw the emergence of such progressive fields of study as sociology, economics, political science, scientific agriculture, and the enormous expansion of the theoretical and applied sciences. Circumstances of time and place determined that many of the pioneers in these fields would choose to work at the University of Wisconsin, an institution increasingly famous for its pragmatic application of progressive thought. Many of these same men and women chose to make their homes in the newly formed suburb of University Heights, whose creation and development from 1893-1930 closely parallels the history of the progressive era and the University of Wisconsin. From its earliest settlement University Heights has been associated with prominent members of the University faculty, including such giants of the Progressive Era as Richard T. Ely, nationally famous economist and first director of the school of Economics and Edward A. Ross, first chairman of the Department of Sociology and one of the pioneers in the field of social psychology. Some idea of the breadth and depth of these university associations may be gained from the fact that of the 346 single-family residences within the Heights, 120 were built and first occupied by senior university faculty and administrators. These men and women made contributions to American life and thought whose significance extended beyond the city and university to the state, the nation and the world. The list that follows is only a sampling of those who built and/or occupied houses in the Heights within the period of significance from 1894-1930. Even so, it serves to illustrate the diversity of their achievements.

Agriculture:

Professor Henry C. Taylor, 222 Princeton Street.

-Founded department of Agriculture Economics; first professor of Agriculture Economics in the United States; authored first agricultural economics textbook.

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8. Significance (Continued), Page 6

Professor Andrew R. Whitson, 1920 Arlington Place.

-Pioneer developer of intensive land use inventories.

Professor Lewis R. Jones, 146 N. Prospect Avenue

-Developed first yellow cabbage variety, saving the Wisconsin cabbage industry.

Commerce:

Dean Fayette H. Elwell, 2025 Chadbourne Avenue

-First dean of the School of Business.

Conservation:

Professor Alfred W. Schorger, 168 N. Prospect Avenue.

-Nationally famous Professor of Wildlife Management, instrumental in the early history of the Wildlife Ecology Department founded by Aldo Leopold; Author of, The Passenger Pigeon - Its Natural History and Extinction, which was awarded the William Brewster Medal.

Economics:

Professor Richard T. Ely, 205 N. Prospect Avenue. (NRHP)

-First director of Department of Economics, one of the most famous American economists of the early 1900s.

Education:

Professor Avril S. Barr, 160 N. Prospect Avenue.

-Pioneer in educational research and research on the prediction and the measurement of teaching success.

Engineering:

Professor Jesse B. Kommers, 1930 Regent Street.

-Pioneer in metal fatigue studies.

Industry:

Professor Frederic E. Turneure, 166 N. Prospect Avenue.

-Pioneer work on the basic principals of reinforced concrete construction.

Invention:

Professor Richard S. McCaffrey, 1937 Arlington Place

-Invented process for sulphur removal from iron ore; improved the Bessemer steel refining process.

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Page 7

8. Significance (Continued), Page 7

Professor Max Mason, 1902 Arlington Place.

- Inventor of the Mason Hydroplane for use in anti-submarine warfare and detection, later President of the University of Chicago.

Literature:

Professor Frederic L. Paxson, 2122 Van Hise Avenue.

- Professor of History, whose book, History of the American Frontier, won the 1924 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Science:

Professor Edward A. Birge, 2011 Van Hise Avenue.

- Developed the concept of a lake as a unit of environmental life; researched the temperature gradients, pressure, nutrients and stratification of water; often called "the father of modern limnology."

Professor Joseph M. Mathews, 128 Lathrop Street.

- Researched heats of vaporization of organic compounds; established first course at an American university in colloid chemistry.

Social/Humanitarian:

Professor Edward A. Ross, 2021 Chamberlain Avenue.

- Founded the Department of Sociology; instrumental in the development of the field of social psychology.

Theater:

Professor Margaret M'Doubler, 2020 Kendall Avenue.

- Recognized as the founder of modern dance in higher education. The Department of Dance at the university granted the first degree in Dance Education given in America.

Again, this list is only a sampling and can do no more than suggest the variety of the accomplishments achieved by those associated with the Heights during its period of greatest significance. Neither does this list document the achievements of subsequent owners, whose continued university associations are part of the fabric of University Heights to this day and whose accomplishments remain to be evaluated by future generations.

IV. Integrity of the District

What visitors to the Heights see today is remarkably like what would have met the eye fifty years ago; a prosperous residential suburb with buildings of considerable architectural distinction existing today in a largely unaltered state of preservation. The most important single factor in achieving this unaltered state has been the continued ability of the Heights to attract the same mix of university, governmental and managerial elite, and in about the same proportions, as was characteristic of the original occupants.

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Page 8

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8. Significance (continued), Page 8

This social cohesiveness has had a direct bearing on the architectural cohesiveness of the district since it has provided a steady flow of owners who have appreciated the heritage that they found in the Heights and who have been willing and able to maintain their houses as in times past.

There are a number of reasons why these elite members of the community have been drawn to the Heights for so many years. These include a convenient location relative to places of work, good neighborhood schools, good public transportation and other positive urban amenities. But perhaps the most important reason lies in the design and scale of houses within the district. It is the good fortune of the Heights to be a neighborhood comprised of medium to large size houses, buildings which are still practical to maintain and which have not needed to be subdivided in order to fit into the current housing market.

Other factors contributing to the sense of time and place felt in the Heights are the relatively early date by which the Heights was completed which had the effect of minimizing modern intrusions. Purely architectural considerations include the aforementioned similarity of size and scale which gives an overall visual identity to the Heights that separates it from its more modest neighbors.

Serious intrusions into the fabric of University Heights have been limited to that portion of the plat which fronts on University Avenue, being the north side of blocks two through six. Historically, this part of the plat consisted largely of single family, frame, two-story vernacular residences built by University farm workers, skilled craftsmen and small tradesmen. In addition, several very well designed two, four and eight unit apartment buildings and two gasoline filling stations were added in the 1920s as the vacant lots were filled. In the 1960s many of the single family residences were demolished to allow for the expansion of church parking lots on blocks 3 and 6. The only other intrusions in the district are a very small number of 1950's and 60's ranch houses which have filled some of the few vacant lots that remain in the Heights today.

There are two other suburbs of Madison which attract the same mix of people as the Heights, namely Nakoma and Shorewood Hills. Both of these suburbs were developed early enough (1913 and 1916 respectively) to have a group of Prairie and Craftsman style homes and both are notable for the size and quality of their homes done in the Period Revival styles, but neither has the same degree of outstanding architecture nor the predominance of University associations with which University Heights is so rich.

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National Park Service**

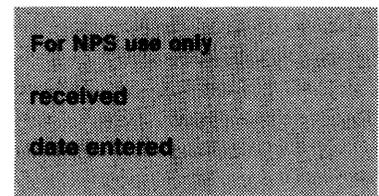
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9. Major Bibliographic References (corrections)

Add:

Orr, Gordon D., Jr. "Louis W. Claude: Madison Architect of the Prairie School,"  
Prairie School Review, Volume XIV, Chicago: Prairie Avenue Bookshop, 1981.

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and Form-Givers, unpublished master's thesis, Madison: University of Wisconsin,  
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Madison: Historic Madison, Inc., 1975 (Vol. I).

(Submitted 1 February 1983)

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9. Major Bibliographical References, Page 1

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Building Permits and other Records, 1914-1981. Development Assistance Unit, Lower Level, Madison Municipal Building, Madison.

City of Madison and Town of Madison Property Tax Rolls, SHSW/Archives collection, Madison.

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Madison Democrat, 1893-1894.

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Neckar, Lance University Heights: A Walk through a Turn of the Century Suburb, Madison, 1976.

Nesbit, Robert C. Wisconsin: A History, Madison, 1973.

Orr, Gordon D. Jr. Perspectives of a University, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1978.  
Univeristy Heights: A Walking Tour, Madison, 1977  
The Louis B. Claude Collection and Records of Gordon D. Orr, Jr., FAIA

Register of Deeds, Dane County Courthouse, 210 Monona Avenue, Madison.

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10. Boundary Justification, Page 1

Research to determine the boundaries of the University Heights district centered on three areas:

1. Historical research into the original boundaries of the plat of University Heights and of adjacent areas.
2. A detailed architectural analysis of the buildings within the identified plat of University Heights and of adjacent areas.
3. Conversation with past and present inhabitants of University Heights to determine perceived boundaries.

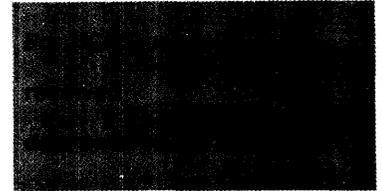
From the onset, the fact that there existed an area which had been platted under the name "University Heights", served as a control. Research was undertaken to determine if the platted area was a coherent architectural and historical entity distinct from its neighbors. The results of this research showed that the original plat was created earlier than any of its neighbors, had a greater number of University of Wisconsin faculty members as original and continuing occupants, and was comprised of both larger and more architecturally distinguished buildings than exist in any of the adjacent areas. This same research also showed that these characteristics were spread uniformly throughout the plat of University Heights. Conversations with the residents showed that there was a clearly perceived sense of place among them and that agreement as to the boundaries of University Heights was uniform and was, moreover, contiguous with that of the original plat. Finally, observation showed striking differences in geography between the Heights and its neighbors. Consequently, it was found appropriate to use the historic boundaries of the plat of University Heights as the boundaries for the University Heights Historic District with the exception of the north half of blocks two through six fronting on University Avenue. This area has been excluded from the district because the demolition of many of the original buildings along University Avenue for parking lots and for modern buildings, whose scale and usage does not conform to the prevailing historic scale and usage of the district, has so altered this area that all sense of the original has been lost.

10. Boundary Description

The boundaries of the University Heights Historic District are as follows: beginning at the intersection of Breese Terrace and University Avenue and continuing westerly along the center of University Avenue to the intersection of University Avenue and Lathrop Street, thence southerly and intersecting with a line forming the rear property line of Lot 1, Block 2, thence westerly along a continuation of said line forming the rear property lines of Lots 1-5, Block 2; Lots 1-6, Block 3; Lots 1-7, Block 4; Lots 1-8, Block 5 and Lots 1-9, Block 6 (all of which lots front on University Avenue) and

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10. Boundary Description, (cont'd)

intersecting with a point in the center of Allen Street, thence southerly along the center of Allen Street to the intersection of Allen Street and Regent Street, thence easterly along the center of Regent Street to the intersection of Regent Street and Lathrop Street, thence northerly along the center of Lathrop Street to the intersection of Lathrop Street and Summit Avenue, thence easterly along the center of Summit Avenue to the intersection of Summit Avenue and Breese Terrace, thence northerly along the center of Breese Terrace to the point of beginning. Said boundaries are the same as the original boundaries of the plat of University Heights, recorded on June 12, 1893 and on file at the Dane County Register of Deeds in Plat Book No. 1, Page 17, with the exception of the afore-mentioned lots fronting on University Avenue.

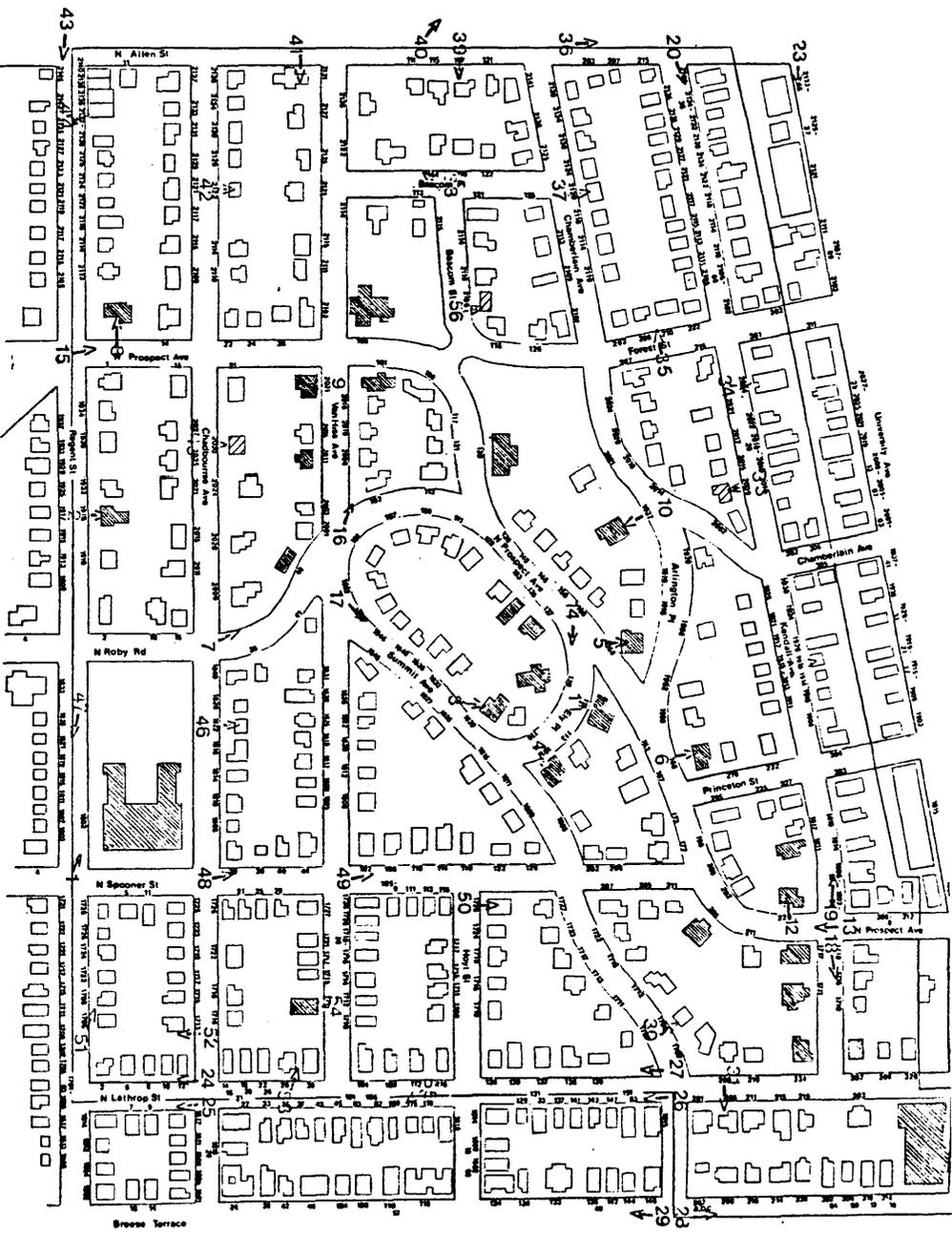


PHOTO-RAPHC LOCATION MAP  
 UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 scale : one inch equals 200 feet

PHOTO  
 CONTRIBUTING  
 INTRODUCTION  
 NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY

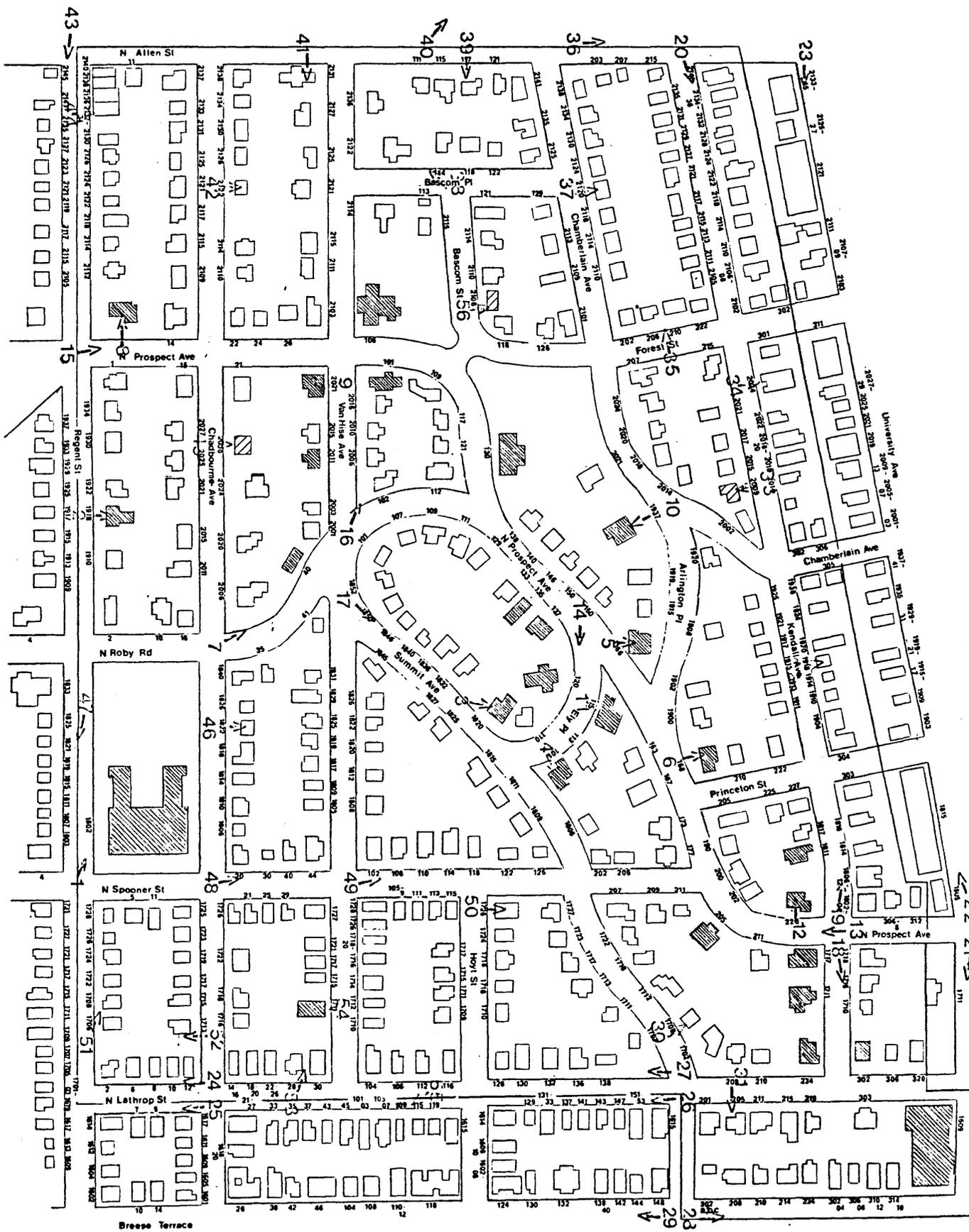


PHOTO -GRAPHIC LOCATION MAP  
 UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT



# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		Association with historic personages

**Specific dates** 1893 to present      **Builder/Architect** (see individual survey forms)

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

I. Introduction

The University Heights district is important to the history and architectural development of the City of Madison because of its place in that history as Madison's first elite residential suburb. The Heights has traditionally been home to some of the most distinguished members of the faculty of the adjacent University of Wisconsin. Many of these men and women were important locally for their roles in the history and development of the University and of the City and are important nationally for their roles in the intellectual history of the nation. The houses that these men and women built for themselves were often the products of the finest local and midwestern architects of the time and their survival as a group has preserved them as an anthology of the residential design available to members of a progressive middle class in the early decades of the twentieth century in the midwest.

II. Historical Development

In March of 1893 the longtime owner of the land, Breese J. Stevens, sold his 106 acre property located just outside the western boundary of Madison to the newly formed University Heights Company for \$53,000. Prior to this date Stevens, a prominent corporation lawyer, Mayor of Madison in 1884 and president of the Madison Land and Lumber Company and the Monona Land Company, had, along with other members of his family in New York State, owned this parcel as far back as 1856 along with considerable acreage elsewhere on the west side of Madison. After the eastern half of the property was logged for firewood in 1862-1863 the land remained half woods and half pasture until 1893 when the parcel was sold. Stevens' reasons for selling at this time are conjectural but three factors certainly influenced his decision. The creation of the suburb of South Madison in 1889 had begun the first movement of population away from the increasingly crowded and expensive downtown area of the city. Coincidental with this movement was the formation of the Madison City Railways Company, which by 1893 was being extended westward to serve the new suburbs. Rumors concerning the extension of these newly electrified lines to areas in proximity with Stevens' land were published in local papers and were confirmed on May 21, 1893. Thirdly, the University of Wisconsin's attempt to purchase the adjacent area of Camp Randall for future expansion in late 1892 probably acted as a catalyst to the development of the Heights. Stevens, a member of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents since 1891, was certainly well aware of this circumstance. When legislative approval for the purchase was granted on April 14, 1893, Stevens had already sold out to the University Heights Company.

The principal officers in the University Heights Company were William T. Fish and Burr W. Jones. William T. Fish, president and treasurer, was a prominent contractor and a pioneer in suburban development in Madison. As president of the Madison Land Improvement Company he had platted and developed the nearby suburb of Wingra Park in 1892. Burr W. Jones, secretary, was one of Madison most prominent attorneys. Besides his extensive practice, he was Dane County District Attorney, 1873-1877; and would later become an Associate Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The curvilinear plat these men