

### **College Avenue, S.E.**

15 College S.E. Wilcox House. In 1904, Frederick P. Wilcox, a prominent Grand Rapids realtor, built this Dutch Colonial Revival house, following the style of architecture preferred by the Dutch patroons of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island. It is the only house of its style in the city of Grand Rapids, and one of the few examples left in the country. The unusual roof line, called "crow's steps," is of particular interest because, legend has it, they were used by chimney sweeps who emerged covered with soot, black as crows. An interesting architectural detail is the use of a wide retaining arch containing three smaller arches over the 2nd-story windows on the facade. The house is noteworthy for careful attention to authentic detail, and the interior is accented by murals done by the noted local artist Mathias Alten.

20 College S.E. The Waters House. Built as a 2-story frame structure in 1898-1900 by Dudley E. Waters, this house was extensively remodeled in 1930. It now stands as a Georgian Colonial mansion, in the Adamesque style, with an imposing 2-story semicircular portico supported by massive Ionic columns. A galleried terrace leads to the elegant Palladian entry with its large leaded fanlight. The house is 12,000 square feet in area. It was converted into four apartments in 1960-61. Mr. Waters began his career as a lumberman, working with his father, and then entered the banking world in 1891. He was also one of the largest real estate brokers in Grand Rapids. Privately, he had one of the largest collections of wooden cigar store Indians in the United States. He collected autographs of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, as well as Currier and Ives prints. He was truly a man of many interests.

**23 College S.E.** The Fletcher / Baxter House. This spacious brick home was built in 1894 by Niram A. Fletcher, an attorney and partner with George P. Wanty. Mr. Fletcher died on August 15, 1899, at the age of 49, and his widow, Mrs. Julia L. Fletcher, lived here until about 1911. The next occupant was Alexander W. Hompe, president of the Royal Furniture Co. In 1922, Howard F. Baxter of the Baxter Laundry purchased and occupied the house. His wife died in 1940. The spacious brick home had been built on the north half of a 146' x 200' lot, and was converted to three apartments in 1949: one with seven rooms on the first floor, one with seven rooms on the second, and one with three rooms on the second floor rear. The Baxter family still owned the house when it was sold in February, 1965. At the time it was demolished for the Dodgson Apartments, the house had an assessed valuation of \$22,400, and was still in excellent repair. It had a slate roof, a gas furnace, and steam heat. A cement driveway led to a 3-car garage. It was sold through the Fletcher Realty Co. with an asking price of \$50,000; it had been offered three years earlier for \$60,000. (Photo: GRPL, real estate collection, February 3, 1965.)



23

08/25/65

2005

E. DeVries & Sons

To reuse water and sewer lines.

36 College S.E. The Daniel H. Waters house was built in 1852. Three generations of the family lived here. There were over 30 rooms, with a fireplace in every room. It was converted to six apartments in 1951, and demolished for the Waters Towers Apartments in the mid-1960's. A fine photo is in the Robinson collection, E1468; also in Lorenson.

37

38

40	02/25/65	1890	<i>Aalsburg Construction Co.</i>
	04/05/71	3834	<i>Capitol</i>

45 College S.E. Putman House. This house was built in 1887 by Enos Putman, president of Ball, Barnhart & Putman, wholesale grocers. He was also founder of the Grand Rapids National Bank.

50 College S.E. A photo of the predecessor of the College Avenue Medical Building (in 2000 the Social Security office) is in the Lorenson collection.

64 College S.E. Photo in the Lorenson collection.

103 College S.E. The Lowe-Idema House. Built in 1895 as the home of lumber merchant and philanthropist Edward Lowe, who later moved to the present campus of Aquinas College, this 4-story Chateausque house has about 6,800 square feet. During the early 1890's, Mr. and Mrs. Lowe visited England on many occasions, and it is believed that the architecture combines many of the elements they found particularly attractive in the great homes of the country. The tan brick used in its construction was imported from England. It features 17 rooms, six massive fireplaces, nine baths, stained glass windows, 104 leaded beveled glass windows, a double-hanging switchback staircase with a 3rd-floor gallery, a semi-circular tower with a candle-snuffer roof, and a wine vault in the basement. The house was the birthplace of the Kent Country Club, the first golf club in Michigan. On February 1, 1896, Mr. Lowe, who had become interested in the game of golf after visiting St. Andrews Club in Scotland in 1895, hosted 11 other gentlemen at a dinner party at which the club was organized. The building was the home of the Lowe family until 1902. The Henry Idema family purchased the house in 1906 and occupied it until 1953. A prominent member of the financial community, Mr. Idema became vice president of the Kent Savings Company, now the Old Kent Bank & Trust Company, in 1892. In 1929 he became chairman of the board of that firm, a position he held until 1949. After 1953 the house was used mainly as office space. It was acquired by the Greystone Group in 1989, and by Burgler Hanson Advertising in 1992. The latter firm paid \$260,000 for its purchase, and spent another \$90,000 in renovations.

**112 College S.E.** This 3-story brick residence was built in 1867, and purchased by the Bissell family in 1889. Mrs. Anna S. Bissell still occupied the home in 1912. In 1952, the



house, situated on two acres of land, was owned by Frank F. Deyo of Rockford, and had been converted into two apartments down and two up. The brick structure was in A-1 condition at that time. The floors were of oak. A gas boiler allowed for steam heat, but there were seven fireplaces in the house, along with six baths. There was a large garage. The assessed valuation was \$30,700; but the house had been listed twice, for \$50,000 and then for \$47,000. It was finally purchased and demolished to build the studio of WOOD-TV at 120 College S.E.

(Old #80. Photos: top, Baxter, p. 783; bottom, GRPL, real estate file, October 20, 1952.)



**115 College S.E.** The Voigt House. This opulent and historic mansion, designed by local architect William G. Robinson and built in 1895, was the home of Carl Gustav



Adolph Voigt, whose Voigt Milling Co. was on the south side of Pearl Street at the Grand River, on the site of the VanAndel Museum Center. Eventually the Voigt Milling Works included both the Star and Crescent Flour Mills. Born in Saxony in 1833, Mr. Voigt came with his family to the U.S. in 1847, and settled on a farm near Michigan City, IN. The family moved to Grand Rapids in 1875. Together with W.G. Herpolsheimer, he founded one of the city's best known department stores. The land for his home cost \$10,000, and the house itself was built for \$24,000. Home to two generations of the Voigt family until the death of Mr. Ralph A. Voigt in 1971, the mansion is furnished with belongings the family used over the years. Many of the original furnishings have been preserved and can be seen throughout the Victorian dwelling. Constructed of red brick with a large wrap-around porch, the house is a romantic Chateausque, Queen Anne adaptation of the chateau at Chenonceaux, France, from which Henry II's mistress was evicted by Catherine de' Medici in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Peculiar to this style of architecture is the angle of the

circular tower. The home, with 8-inch-thick brick walls, was built as Mr. Voigt's retirement residence. Scrupulously preserved, complete with the original turn-of-the-century décor and opulent interior appointments, three floors are open for touring, from the completely equipped laundry room in the basement to the second-floor bedrooms and servant area. The beautifully carved woodwork and brilliant stained glass windows attest to the craftsmanship which went into every detail of the construction. Walls are hung with swag draperies, silk, and tapestry; lovely lace curtains grace the windows; and fine Oriental rugs enhance the inlaid parquet floors. Velvet portières and beautiful antique furniture reveal the taste of the Victorian era. The elegant dining room features a hand-carved sideboard filled with glittering cut crystal and gleaming silver. Other features are a split flue fireplace with a carved golden oak mantel and mirror frames. The kitchen has its original slate sink and floor-to-ceiling ice box. The electroliers are unusual lighting fixtures that combine both gas and electricity. Voigt was afraid electricity was just a fad, so he had the home's fixtures piped for gas as a backup. The unusual brass chandeliers and wall sconces remain as functional combinations of both sources of power. Many personal items, including a Chickering piano, treasured family albums, exquisite dresser sets, china, crystal, art objects, and clothes worn by the ladies of the Voigt family lend a sense of warmth, and make the house more than a museum. It is a home where one family lived amidst the gracious elegance of the Victorian era, all carefully preserved. The fully restored carriage house is also open for viewing. The

Voigt House is a historic house museum, and is a property of the Grand Rapids Public Museum. (Photo: *Voigt House Victorian Museum*, Public Museum of Grand Rapids brochure. Sketch: 1997 Heritage Hill Home Tour, p. 12.)

**125 College S.E.** The Byrne / Hanchett House. An outstanding adaptation of an English manor house, this fine home was built about 1891 by Eva Byrne Brandt. It was

acquired by Benjamin S. Hanchett in 1918. The slate tiled roof, five chimneys, and stone window sills combine with the brick facade to present a feeling of permanence. One of the notable interior features of this house is the private chapel with its magnificent stained glass windows. The artisans who created this masterpiece came from Italy especially to carve the wood and marble decorations. (Photo: by David Hanks, in 1973 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)



134 College S.E. Photo in the Lorensen collection.

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216 College S.E. This opulent house was built about 1885 for William D. Gilbert, a clerk for the Grand Rapids Gas Light Co. The home sits in the subdivision known as Gilbert's Addition; and William's father, Thomas D. Gilbert, was secretary of the Gas Light Co. and president of National City Bank. The Queen Anne house features the characteristic irregularity in massing, and incorporates bay windows, wall insets, and projections for delightfully random changes in the horizontal continuity of the wall plane. The living room is walled in teak, which has been painted with five coats of dramatic "garnet glory." Hidden pocket doors have been uncovered and restored.

226 College S.E. This large 3-story frame house was built by the Klingman family about 1900. In 1908, a 3-story addition with a library on the first floor was built on to the original house, which by that date was owned by the Tuthill family of the Oliver Machinery Co. Attorney Wencel and Marguerite Milanowski purchased the home for their large family about 1951, and the family occupied it until the summer of 2008.

**227 College S.E.** The Keeler House. Designed by Osgood and Osgood, this excellent example of Georgian Revival architecture was begun in 1911 and completed in 1913 for Miner S. Keeler.



An exact copy of an historic home in Rockford, Illinois, this home represents Georgian Revival in its purest form. It has a perfectly symmetrical facade, which features two-story Ionic pilasters with a scrolled pediment above the central window. The portico has a delicate balustraded gallery. The interior features quarter-sawn oak woodwork and a grand staircase to the third-floor ballroom. The Keeler family was identified with the Middleville Manufacturing Co., which made brass hardware. After 1893, the Keelers purchased the interests of the other shareholders and organized the Keeler Brass Co. Through the efforts of the old

Grand Rapids Board of Trade and many other interested businessmen, the company moved to Grand Rapids. Part of the inducement for the company to move its facilities was the provision of a site, the deed to which was to be turned over to the company when 100 men had been employed. (Photo: by David Hanks, in 1976 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)

264 College S.E. The Waddell House. Designed and built by architect George Waddell in 1889, this home is believed to be the oldest standing log structure in the city. George Waddell, described as a highly esteemed young businessman, was born in 1846 in Canada and came to Grand Rapids when he was 21. After studying architecture in St. Louis, he returned to Grand Rapids in 1872 to collaborate with John Grady. Together, they designed and built St. Andrew's Cathedral, the Thomas Gilbert home at 55 Lafayette N.E., and the Godfrey-White block on Monroe Avenue. When Waddell, his wife, Leni, and three children moved into the home, it was equipped with two telephones, one for each of the phone companies operating separate systems at the time, Citizen and Bell. The home also featured electric as well as gas lighting. After Waddell's death in 1894, Leni married Abraham Maskell. They lived in the house until Maskell's death in 1905. Henry Sullivan, an executive with the Pennsylvania Railroad Co., showed interest in purchasing the home in 1917 but could not convince his wife, Katherine, to move to the "country." She, however, eventually relented and the family took up residence in the home in 1920. Following a trip to Philadelphia, Sullivan and a group of business acquaintances formed the Morris Plan Bank, one of the few banking institutions to grant home loans to the average working man. The Morris Plan Bank later became Central Bank, which later became Union Bank and Trust Co. Today Union Bank is part of National Bank of Detroit. In the early 1930's, Sullivan's granddaughter, May Kay Kirby, used the house as headquarters for the Town Hall Lecture Series. The series featured prominent lecturers from Europe and the United States in black tie affairs. During this period, the house became a favorite gathering spot as many friends and neighbors welcomed the opportunity to meet the famous speakers. Wencel and Marguerite Milanowski and their large family occupied the house in the 1930's and 1940's until they moved to 226 College S.E. in 1951. Presently, the seven-bedroom home is a two-family dwelling. The owners, John and Betsy Westman, occupy the main floor and the front half of the second floor. The remaining second and third floors are rented.

**332 College S.E.** This house was built in 1908 for Frank Voigt, eldest son of Carl Voigt. Frank was the only Voigt child who never lived in his parents' retirement home at 115



College S.E. He was the president of the Voigt Milling Co. when he had this house built. The milling company included both the Star and Crescent mills on the bank of the Grand River along Front Avenue. The house is a Queen Anne subtype known as Free Classic, but is more commonly referred to as a Craftsman-style home. Numerous owners since the Voigts as well as a conversion into a 2-unit apartment house in the 1960's took a toll on the house. A previous owner and the 1998 owners, Chris and Tom Truesdale, have spent untold time and money

converting the home to its original self. It is one of the best restorations in the neighborhood, and is filled besides with the owners' fabulous antique collection. The main floor is home to three different woods: oak in the entrance hall, butternut in the parlor and living room, and maple in the dining room. The stained glass window in the front stair landing is original to the house; and is a junior version of the Voigt House stairway window, down to the small, prism-like "ondoyant" glass pieces that change colors with the sunlight. The upstairs back room, now a library/television room, was probably a servants' day room, with very plain moldings and no distinguishing features. The "ivy-garden" kitchen was the last major renovation. (Photo: Heritage Hill Association, 1998 October 3 & 4 Tour of Homes brochure.)

- 333 College S.E. A good example of the Prairie style in its vernacular American Foursquare form, this house was built in 1912 for William and Hattie Jack. Mr. Jack was an executive of the American Box Board Co. The house was later sold to Dr. Kortlander. It boasts clean, straight, almost Mission lines. Tim and Libby Stern have lived here since 1987.
- 339 College S.E. Coye House. Classic Revival. Built in 1907-10 by Charles Coye, founder of the Coye Tent & Awning Co.
- 344 College S.E. Joyce Makinen moved to this house in 1964, and has returned a 3-family apartment to a single-family dwelling.
- 352-54 College S.E. This 1908 duplex is a perfect example of the most common form of Prairie style construction: the American Foursquare. Each half of the 2-unit structure mirrors its counterpart.
- 353 College S.E. The Cobey Apartments. Story in GRP or GRH, 09/20/1914. Twin to the Forbes at 447 Wealthy S.E.

**425 College S.E.** The Harvey / Shank House. Built in 1916 by Frank Harvey, secretary of the Leonard Refrigerator Co., this imposing Mediterranean Revival villa is a



noteworthy example of a way of life which was reflected in the homes men built for their families. It combines the individuality of the man with a feeling of timelessness. It provides a sense of continuity for us, allowing us to reflect upon the values of another time. Of particular interest are the Spanish tile roof, the small paned casement windows, and the graceful

balconies. The extensive use of ornate terra cotta detail is very unusual. This is one of a very few homes which feature this type of Della Robbia trim; and it is a delight to gaze at the craftsmanship represented in the smiling faces of nameless cherubs and the intricately designed fruit and flowers above the entryway, the windows, and on the porch balusters. (Photo: by David Hanks, in 1973 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)

- 440 College S.E. This home was built about 1905 by George L. Keeler, owner of Keeler Brass, although he never lived here. He resided next door, at 438 College S.E. He likely built it on a speculative basis, and eventually sold it to one of his sales managers, Earle S. Clark. The house is another example of the Prairie style: side-gabled, symmetrical, but with an off-center entrance. Unlike many homes of the era, this one has an openness and flow about it that carries the visitor smoothly from room to room without abrupt turns and obstacles. The kitchen's open layout invites the outside in, as the large windows allow an almost conservatory outlook on the garden beyond. John and Jane Vriend are the 1998 occupants.
- 455 College S.E. Heald House. Built in 1893 by Charles Heald, president of the Chicago, West Michigan & Lansing Northern Railroad (later the Pere Marquette), the shingle-style house boasts parquet floors and a solarium equipped with a working marble fountain. Fred Nichols of the Nichols & Cox Lumber Co. lived here from 1900 to 1910. The Heald family returned in that year. Later residents were the founder of Lear Instruments, William Lear, and his family

**505 College S.E.** The Amberg House. This home was contracted to Frank Lloyd Wright in 1910, but much of the work was carried through by his talented first apprentice,



Marion Mahony. Mahony took charge of this commission for the Chicago-based architectural firm of H.V. VonHolst. While the Amberg house reflects Wright's genius for relating space, color, and the exterior environment, Mahony's special attention to the leaded glass design is evident throughout the house. Many of the glass

panes are believed to be Tiffany Favrile. Others are thought to be gold. Wright perfected the process of fusing glass to the precious metal early in his career, and the Amberg house contains rare examples of this process. David M. Amberg was a prominent local businessman, civic leader, and a leading member of Temple Emanuel. His wife, Hattie, was a member of the Houseman (Department Store) family. The Ambergs built the house while in their 60's, and occupied it for about 15 years. Their daughter Sophie had married Meyer May, and had had Wright design and build the May home at 450 Madison S.E. These are the only two homes in the city designed by Wright. The Amberg house is an early example of Wright's prairie houses, rising out of the earth with low-pitched roofs and wide overhangs as an integral part of its environment. On the exterior, ceramic tiles, set into the stucco gables and eaves, continues a pattern of leaded glass within a gridwork of incised lines. A secluded front door was characteristic of Wright's homes. Inside, the home is organized around a great hearth, where interior space under a wide sweeping roof opens to the outdoors. There are no rooms below ground. There is a spectacular 2-story stained glass window; and windows are grouped throughout the house in horizontal strips. Every window is designed with elaborate, but geometrically simple, stained glass. There is unique illuminated stained glass on the vaulted living room and dining room ceilings. The open flow of the rooms creates interior vistas. Natural light floods all the rooms. Wright always wanted to bring the outdoors inside his homes, making the house part of nature. When the Ambergs moved to a more manageable home on Madison Avenue in 1925, the house was sold to the Herpolsheimers, local department store owners. William Herpolsheimer died a few years later, and the furnishings were sold. Theron Goodspeed, an executive of the Pantlind Hotel, lived here from 1935 until his death in the early 1950's. The house was subdivided into five apartments during the 1950's and 1960's. Frank and Linda DeJong bought the house, and in the late 1960's started converting it back to a family home with two apartments. Tom and Anne Logan bought this landmark in 1983. In 1992, they were re-creating the gardens, complete with a fountain. The home has an impressive history. (Photo: by David Hanks, in 1972 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)



**516 College S.E.** The Brayton House. This Georgian Revival mansion was built in 1889 by James Pease Brayton, an early Grand Rapids lumber baron, surveyor, and expert on timber values.



His ability to estimate standing timber brought him national recognition as an authority in this field. The spectacular architecture of his home reflects his wealth and high social status. The house and carriage house span three city lots, and it is the largest single-family dwelling in Heritage Hill. The fluted pilasters and perfectly proportioned columns draw the eye to the graceful lines of this home. The massive gambrelled gable dominates the roofline, while the neo-Palladian doorway extends an inviting welcome. Of special interest is the spiral staircase with a hand-blocked French mural. The mural is a wallpaper historically documented by the Smithsonian. There are two 2-story

windows, one a circular bay window, the other an oriel. The Art Deco bathrooms and the third-story ballroom and stage are impressive. After the McInerney family had owned the home for some years, they donated it in the mid-1960's to the Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids, which used it as living quarters for priests assigned to the Diocesan School Office and Catholic Central High School. The Gene and Phyllis Ball family purchased the home in 1971. Gene was the great-grandson of John Ball. The mansion is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and is also part of Bed & Breakfast Grand Rapids. (Photo: by David Hanks, in 1972 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)

Heritage Hill is fortunate to have a number of carriage houses remaining from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Such buildings could be compared to mini barns, and were built to house



not only the vehicles (primarily carriages) belonging to a family, but also the horses and their tack and food. The white clapboard Brayton carriage house, though less pretentious than the mansion itself, is considered to architecturally match the Georgian Revival style of the main house. The ground level of the carriage house contains two stalls with turntables for vehicles. There is still an original horse stall in the building. The upstairs apartment was once the hayloft until it was converted by the McInerney family,

who lived there from 1935 to 1945. (Photo: *Grand Rapids Magazine*, unknown date, Heritage Hill tour insert, p. HH32.)

808	04/07/67	2400	Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church
	Back filled sewer line.		
851	08/06/86	7502	Neighborhood Improvement--Pitsch
1020	06/11/80	5916	Neighborhood Improvement--Kentwood
1600	05/08/65	1934	Staggs
	No sewer. S.E. corner College & Crofton S.E.		
1620			
1624	04/30/65	1928	Staggs
1648	07/28/2003	9238	Cordes
1743	08/17/70	3583	Cooke
2500			