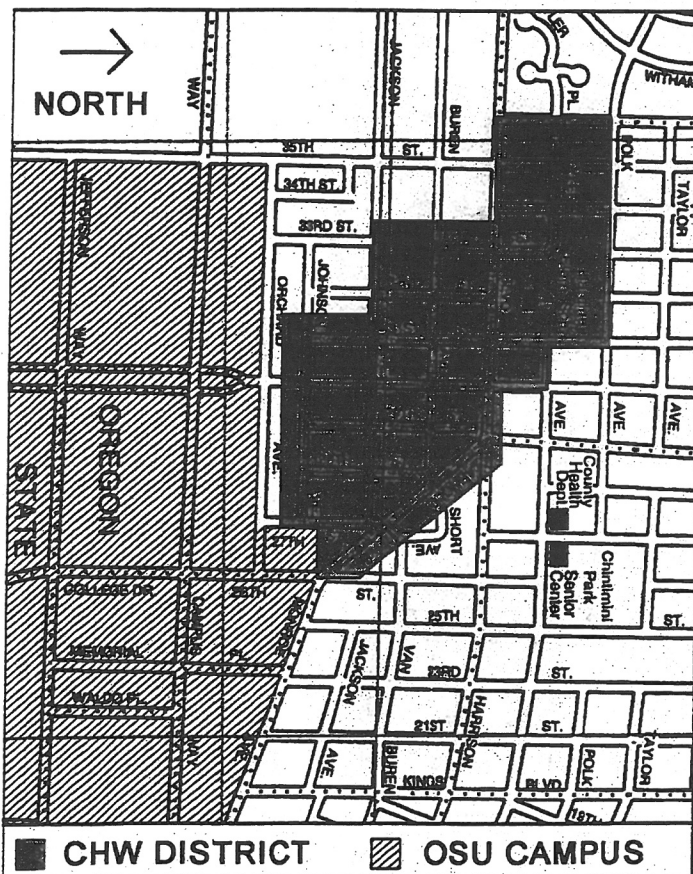


COLLEGE HILL WEST  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

A WALKING TOUR

LOCATION MAP



• CORVALLIS, OREGON •

**Starting the Walking Tour.** The tour starts at 27<sup>th</sup> and Arnold. You follow the historic growth of the neighborhood to the west and north. However, parking may be limited weekdays during OSU's academic year. An alternative route starts at 36<sup>th</sup> and Harrison where on-street parking will be more plentiful. Taking this route you go "backward in time." Along the way, look at the sidewalks for date marks.

College Hill West Historic District

**Overall Description.** The College Hill West Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002 based on the contributions of its historic residents and integrity of the neighborhood. The District contains over 250 historic houses, built on conventional city lots and clustered in a relatively small area. The District is more a community of pragmatic, middle-class homes rather than a showcase of a few grand buildings. Some of the homes are modest, and even the largest reflect the incomes of professionals – rather than the fortunes of lumber or mining barons who built in other historic Oregon cities. The integrity of the neighborhood is a testament to the struggle to preserve the area by several generations of residents, and the overall feel is still much like the community the originators had in mind.

**1905 to 1945.** The period of historic significance covers that time when the building of homes mirrored the westward growth of the small Oregon Agricultural College (OAC) into the more comprehensive Oregon State College (OSC). Suburban development moved northwestward from about 26<sup>th</sup> and Orchard Streets to 36<sup>th</sup> and Tyler.

In 1905 the western part of College Hill was undeveloped farm land on the edge of town. In 1916 a Faculty Club was located on NW Jackson. A period newspaper advertisement touted the virtues of the area, "College Hill Lots in West Corvallis Addition: The Ideal Place to Build in the Newest Part of Town." A building boom occurred in 1920 when 20 homes were built. Early residents met in each others' homes where they dined, read books and plays aloud, and played music together.

The College Hill School was built by the community in 1923. (The original, symmetric 4 room school is on the south side of the present building.) Many neighbors were active in the early Parent Teacher Association.

In the late 1920's, the Great Depression caused a housing lull. Fed by federal recovery money, another building boom started in the mid-1930s and continued until World War II. In 1938 the first addition (a WPA project) to the elementary school was built. Then, the onset of World War II slowed home building to a snail's pace. By 1945, with very few undeveloped lots in College Hill, the post-war housing boom moved on to other Corvallis neighborhoods.

**Historic Neighborhood Personalities.** The same people who built Oregon State College developed the neighborhood: professors, administrators, secretaries, other employees, and students. A total of six Oregon State presidents and acting presidents have lived here, four during the period of historical significance: Frank Ballard, Francois Gilfillan, W.A. Jensen, and George Peavy.

The following residents had campus facilities or programs named after them: F.L. Ballard, J.A. Bexell, J.L. Fairbanks, E.C. Gilbert, Slat A.T. Gill, F.A. Gilfillan, W.J. Gilmore, G. Gleeson, C.B. Mitchell, G.W. Peavy, A.L. Strand, B.L. Thompson, E.H. Weigand, and W. Weniger.

The homes of the following residents are featured on this tour.

[1] W.A. Jensen was Executive Secretary for OAC. He acted as President in 1924 while W.A. Kerr recuperated from an auto accident.

[2] Betty Lynd Thompson was a professor of Phys. Ed. At OSC where she taught innovative dance classes. The Betty Lynd Thompson Studio of Dance is named after her.

[3] J.A. Gilkey was Superintendent of the campus grounds and constructed a greenhouse on the property for botanical experiments. In 1923 he deeded this lot to his daughters. Professor Helen Gilkey became curator of the OSU herbarium.

[4] Arthur Brooks was Chief Requisition Clerk for OSC.

[5] J.A. Bexell was Dean of the School of Commerce from 19xx until 1931.

[6] K.C. Reitsma was a local contractor. In addition to this home, he built several houses on NW 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup>.

[7] Leo Fairbanks was head of the Art and Architecture Department for 23 years. He probably designed this home.

[8] The original school was built by the residents of the College Hill neighborhood, and it served as a community center.

[9] Charles Mitchell created the first Speech Department in the Pacific Northwest. He helped to build the first theater on campus and created the Radio Department.

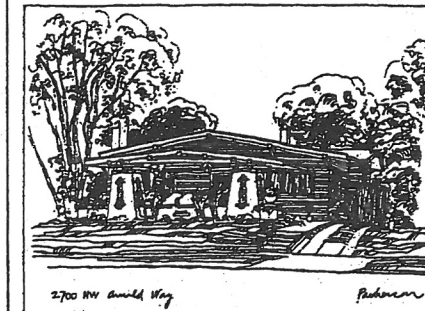
[10] M.H. Allen owned the Allen Heating Company. In 1940 he sold his house to George Peavy who was President of OSC at the time. Peavy was later Mayor of Corvallis.

[11] Paul Petrie was head of the music department for 23 years and Lillian Petrie was a Professor of Piano. They entertained extensively in their home, "Casa Musica."

[12] Ellwood Smith was a Professor of English and Dean of Lower Division (Liberal Arts).

**Local Place Names.** In 1850 Charles Johnson received a 320 acre grant from the U.S. government. In the 1870's the original university bought the southern part of the Johnson homestead for expansion of the campus. The northern part became most of what is now the College Hill West Historic District. In 1856 Johnson sold off the northeast corner of his property, and the diagonal property line is now the site of Arnold Way. (B.L. Arnold was an early Oregon State University president). Johnson Ave. was named for farmer Johnson, not President Johnson, and Orchard Ave. was named after Johnson's apple orchard. Before flood control dams were built on the Willamette River, Corvallis was subject to frequent floods. "College Hill" had enough altitude to avoid being inundated by water.

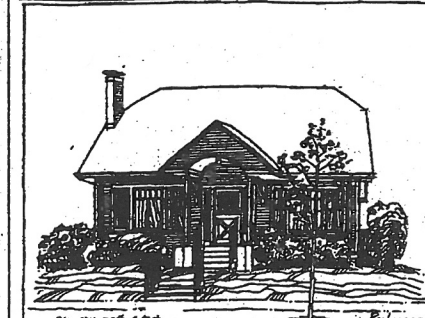
W.A. JENSEN HOUSE 1



CIRCA • 1916  
STYLE •  
Bungalow  
HISTORY •  
Jensen was acting  
OAC President in  
1924

2700 NW ARNOLD WAY

B.L. THOMPSON HOUSE 2



CIRCA • 1921  
STYLE •  
Colonial  
HISTORY •  
Thompson taught  
interpretive dance  
at OSC

212 NW 28<sup>th</sup> STREET

J.A. GILKEY HOUSE 3



CIRCA • 1923  
STYLE •  
Bungalow  
HISTORY •  
Helen Gilkey was  
the curator of the  
OSC Herbarium

136 NW 30<sup>th</sup> STREET

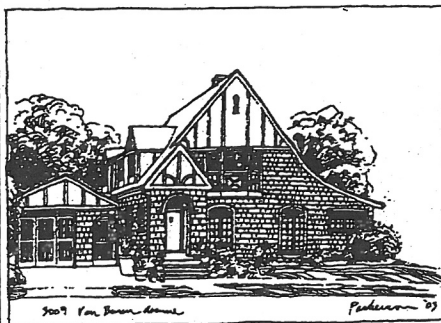
A. BROOKS HOUSE 4



CIRCA • 1925  
STYLE •  
Colonial  
HISTORY •  
Brooks was chief  
registration clerk  
for OSC

220 NW 30<sup>th</sup> STREET

## 5 J. BEXELL HOUSE

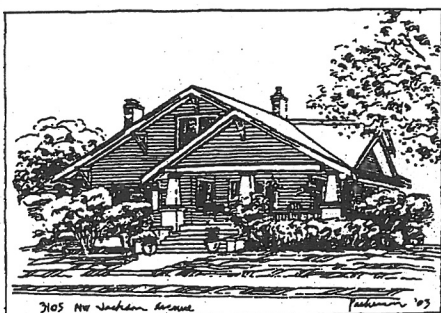


**CIRCA • 1926  
STYLE •  
Tudor Revival  
HISTORY •**

The architect, John Bennes, who designed this house also built many campus buildings

3009 NW VAN BUREN AVE ●

## 6 K.C. REITSMA HOUSE



**CIRCA • 1920  
STYLE •  
Bungalow  
HISTORY •**

Reitsma was a contractor who built many of the homes on 31st St.

3105 NW JACKSON AVE ●

## 7 J.L. FAIRBANKS HOUSE

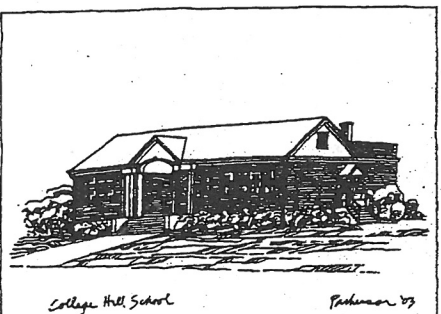


**CIRCA • 1926  
STYLE •  
Tudor  
HISTORY •**

Fairbanks was an architecture professor at OAC

316 NW 32<sup>nd</sup> STREET ●

## 8 COLLEGE HILL SCHOOL



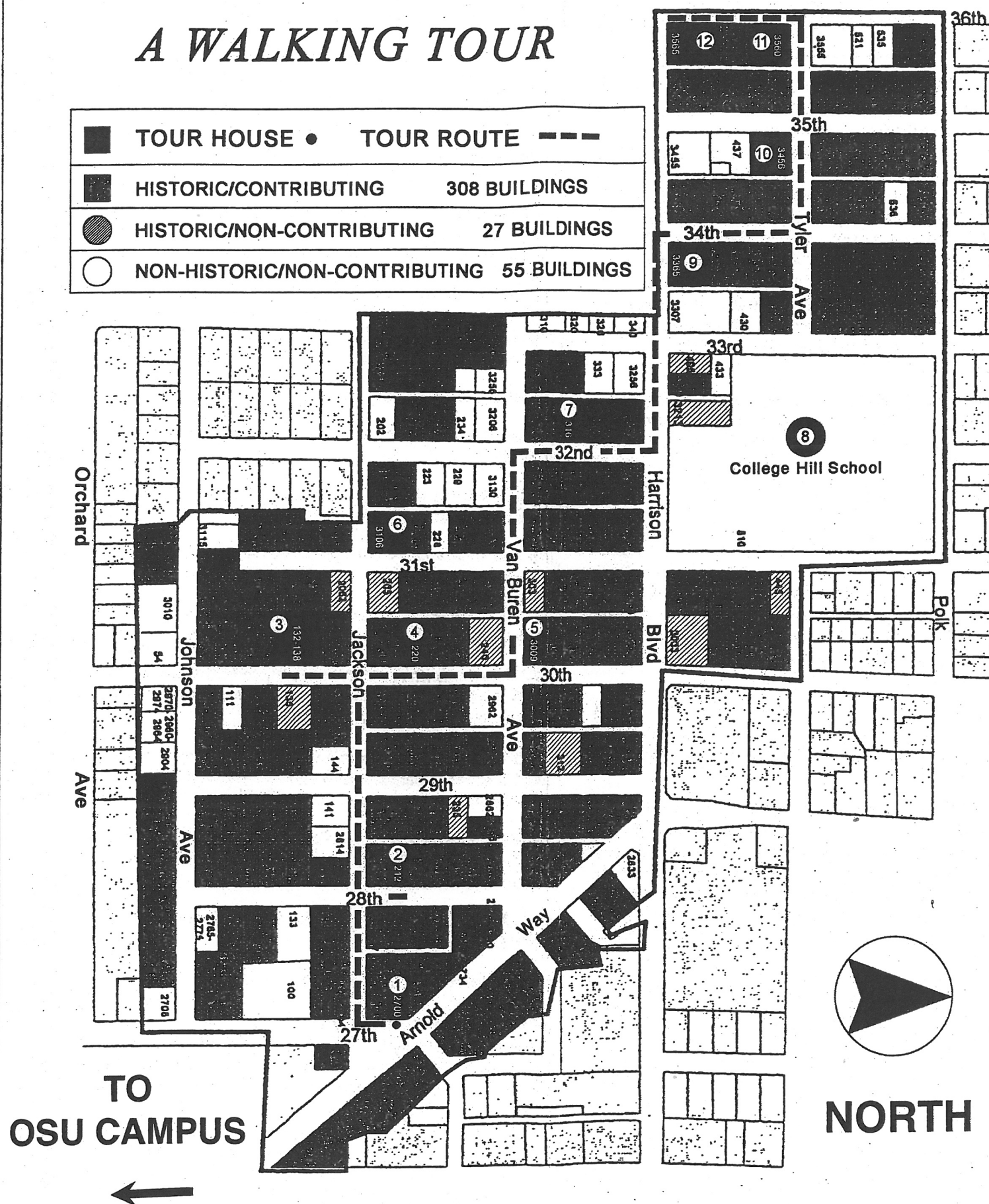
**CIRCA • 1923  
STYLE •  
Colonial  
HISTORY •**

The original school, as shown here, consisted of 4 rooms

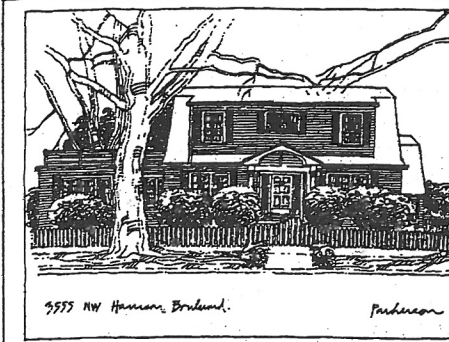
510 NW 31<sup>st</sup> STREET ●

# A WALKING TOUR

■	TOUR HOUSE ●	TOUR ROUTE - - -
■	HISTORIC/CONTRIBUTING	308 BUILDINGS
●	HISTORIC/NON-CONTRIBUTING	27 BUILDINGS
○	NON-HISTORIC/NON-CONTRIBUTING	55 BUILDINGS



## C. MITCHELL HOUSE



**CIRCA • 1925  
STYLE •  
Tudor  
HISTORY •**

Charles Mitchell created the first Speech Department in the Pacific Northwest

3355 NW HARRISON BLVD ●

## M.H. ALLEN HOUSE



**CIRCA • 1931  
STYLE •  
Tudor  
HISTORY •**

Allen owned the Allen Heating Co. in Corvallis

3456 NW TYLER AVE ●

## CASA MUSICA



**CIRCA • 1927  
STYLE •  
Tudor  
HISTORY •**

This house was built with a vaulted hall for musical performance

3560 NW TYLER AVE ●

## E. SMITH HOUSE



**CIRCA • 1935  
STYLE •  
Colonial  
HISTORY •**

Smith was Dean of Lower Division Studies at OSC

3555 NW HARRISON BLVD ●

Funds for the printing of this brochure provided by the City of Corvallis and Corvallis Tourism