

University of North Dakota

A Grand Forks Historic District



*A collection of Collegiate Gothic architecture
unrivaled in the Midwest*



Downtown Grand Forks Parade to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone at UND, Oct. 2, 1883

Main Hall, later known as Old Main, was the first building on campus. It housed classrooms, offices, library, dining and lodging for faculty, staff and students. This building, which appeared huge on the open prairie, actually fit within the space between Merrifield and Twamley Halls.



The University of North Dakota core campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of its historic buildings, striking open spaces, and significant contributions in higher education and research to the state and nation.

Events leading up to the establishment of a university in Grand Forks in 1883 were full of the political maneuvering typical of territories striving for statehood. Dakota Territory legislators scrambled to obtain lucrative and prestigious institutions for their communities.

As political alliances formed, dissolved and reformed, George Walsh of Grand Forks quickly introduced “A bill for an Act Locating the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks, N.D., and Providing for the Government thereto.” That the “bill” was a sheaf of blank pages went unnoticed and, in the two days before it would be read in committee, Walsh wrote a real bill and substituted it for the fake. His bill passed and the University of North Dakota came to Grand Forks. This naming of UND was the first official use of the term “North Dakota,” six years before statehood.

Grand Forks land developer William Budge donated twenty acres of flat, windy prairie a mile west of town and promised a \$10,000 observatory. The Territorial Legislature issued bonds for \$30,000 to erect a building and create a functioning University. Though the observatory was never completed, the ample acreage gave the young campus plenty of room to expand.

The first years were difficult. Students were not ready for university level work so preparatory classes had to be added

to the curriculum. The first president, William Blackburn, was a fine scholar but he lacked the organizational and executive skills to create a university from scratch. Main Hall, the only building, began to shift and settle as soon as it was completed; it also had no furnace and no storm windows during the first year of use. UND, in the 1880s, was cold, lonely, and almost inaccessible for much of the spring and winter.

The University nearly closed twice in its early years. First, a tornado struck in 1887, severely damaging Main Hall. Rebuilding was quickly undertaken to thwart talk of moving the school to another community. The greater threat resulted from the economic depression of 1894. State budgets were slashed and UND remained open only because faculty accepted a 25% salary cut and the Grand Forks community raised enough money to keep the school afloat for two years.

That community support was well placed. UND has grown from a single building on the prairie to nearly 150. The core campus, east of the English Coulee, boasts 56 buildings and open spaces listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the second largest concentration of Collegiate Gothic style architecture in the United States.

UND's historic campus and its sorority and fraternity houses represent more than 85 years of architectural styles and educational development in the state of North Dakota. From the days of classical curricula to today's broad range of programs, including professional and graduate degrees; from one building of indeterminate style and problematic construction to 550 acres of educational property, including a National Register Historic District; from infancy to maturity; from classes in Greek to aviation; from raw prairie to structured landscape, the University of North Dakota has grown and prospered.



UND Campus, ca. 1965, Memorial Stadium at center top



UND President's House, ca. 1915

*Buildings on the National Register of Historic Places
in the UND Historic District date from
1899 to 1965.*

Important District Architectural Styles:

Collegiate Gothic - characterized by the use of brick exteriors, stone window and door surrounds, crenellated parapets, gothic-arched entrances, multi-light windows, and the application of exterior tracery as ornamentation. This is the predominant style on the University campus.

Merrifield Hall, A2 and Cover

Tudor Revival - half-timbering with stucco and brickwork, steeply pitched roofs, and dormer windows are all common elements of Tudor Revival. Several campus buildings and Greek houses demonstrate this style.

Gustafson Hall, A19

Jacobethan - typically emphasizing structural elements rather than applied ornamentation, this style usually has arched windows, lighter stone trim and/or terra-cotta trim, and a combination of pillars, porches, balustrades, parapets and steeply pitched roof with high chimneys. Jacobethan is a variant of Tudor design. ***Babcock Hall***, A15

Italianate - derived from the building styles of northern Italy. Building features usually include some combination of low roofs with overhanging eaves, round-headed windows with hood moldings, corner quoins, and an entrance tower. ***Chandler Hall***, B2

Colonial Revival - with roots in the Georgian and Adam styles of the Revolutionary period, Colonial Revival is quite formal, exhibiting symmetry in window and door placement, multi-paned double-hung windows, and enhanced entrances variously featuring fanlights, sidelights, and decorative crowns supported by pilasters or extended out to form a small covered entrance. *President's House*, A5

Neoclassical/Beaux Arts - characterized by symmetry, large prominent columns with decorative capitols, and masonry construction. Designed to present an image of strength and stability, the style was popular for governmental buildings and can be seen in several important buildings in downtown Grand Forks. *Wesley College*, A6 and A7

Classical Revival - a highly symmetrical design with horizontal massing, typically having a low hipped roof that may be partially obscured by balustrades. *Carnegie Library*, A16

Modern - following World War II, architectural design became more spare and simple, with less applied ornamentation. Design elements were derived from function and used more glass and metal. *Pi Kappa Phi House*, C3



Crossing campus from Merrifield Hall; ca. 1958

This brochure has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, United States Department of Interior, and administered by the State Historical Society of North Dakota. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Interior or the State Historical Society of North Dakota, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of Interior or the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U. S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age, in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240

Route A

See Map in Centerfold

Begin at the Old Main Memorial Sphere, 264 Centennial Drive

(Historic building names and build dates are in parentheses.)

A1) Old Main Memorial Sphere (1963) -

Constructed of steel and bronze by designer Stanley O. Johnson, a UND professor of art, the sphere houses an eternal flame and commemorates Main Hall, the first building on the UND campus. (GPS coordinate 47° 55.209' N | 97° 04.347' W)



A2) Merrifield Hall (1929) -

Designed by Joseph Bell DeRemer, noted Grand Forks architect, and named for Webster Merrifield, the fourth president of the University. Merrifield Hall is UND's finest example of Collegiate Gothic, the style of architecture that permeates the campus. Its projecting east and west entrance towers epitomize the style. In each, granite steps lead to three doors that are recessed in compound gothic-arched stone entries. Above, a carved stone cartouche is featured in the spandrels and surmounted by two-story oriel windows, with multiple-light, leaded glass casement windows, trimmed in



stone and capped with a crenelated parapet. Each tower is topped with an inset stone panel beneath a parapet wall that has a broken apex pediment. The corners of the towers are bolstered with piers and dripstones and topped

with decorative stone finials. When built, Merrifield Hall was the largest classroom building in the state. It housed departments from the College of Arts and Sciences and reflected the expanding class offerings available to students in the 1920s.

A3) Burtneff Theatre

(1963) - Designed by the Grand Forks firm of Wells Denbrook and named for district judge Olger B. Burtneff, an alumnus who helped establish the Alumni Association. The theatre was



built as the University neared the end of its post-World War II expansion. Its Collegiate Gothic elements, including brick construction, stone window and door surrounds, and arched entrances, are more restrained. The Comedy and Tragedy masks along the sides of the building are interesting details.

A4) Montgomery Hall (1911; University Commons) -



This Tudor Revival style building was designed by Joseph Bell DeRemer to be the gathering space and dining hall for students. The Tudor Revival elements are especially evident in the

steeply pitched roofs and dormer windows. The Commons later exchanged uses with the Carnegie Library when that building became too small to accommodate UND's expanding library. It was renamed, in 1965, in honor of Henry Montgomery, UND's first faculty member.

A5) President's House (1903; Oxford House, J. Lloyd Stone Alumni Center) -

This original President's House is the second oldest standing building on campus. It was the first important Grand Forks commission for architect Joseph Bell DeRemer and is a lovely example of the Colonial Revival style. Formal symmetry is a hallmark of the style, here exhibited in the placement of the windows, doors, columns, and

dormers. The house was the first in Grand Forks to be built with electrical wiring and was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.



A6) Robertson/Sayre Hall (1908/1930; Wesley College) -



Two of four buildings erected by Wesley College in proximity to UND to enable collaboration between the two schools. The Beaux Arts Classical style is apparent in strong symmetry and the classical detailing exemplified by the Greek key motif at the watertable. The low-pitched roof and extended overhangs are also common

to the style. Robertson is the south building and Sayre is on the north.

A7) Corwin/Larimore Hall (1908/1910; Wesley College)

- Somewhat smaller but nearly identical to Robertson/Sayre; Corwin is on the south and Larimore is the northern portion of the structure. The buff-colored brick on these four buildings stands out from other structures on the historic campus.



Wesley College, which focused on religious and music education, gradually became part of UND and was formally purchased by the University in 1965.

A8) Chester Fritz Library (1961) - This Collegiate Gothic design by Wells Denbrook was



named for alumnus and international financier, Chester Fritz, who donated one million dollars toward its construction. The original University Avenue entrance was more impressive,

having a wide bank of steps leading up to three doors, more steps inside then led to the main floor level. The architectural style is especially evident in the multi-paned windows and the massive tower structure.

A9) Law School (1922) - Designed by Frederick W. Keith of Fargo, the Law School exhibits most of the defining features of Collegiate Gothic style: Flemish bond red brick walls topped by a crenelated parapet and stone coping; a prominent central entry with a double-door and side- and top-lights; a stone, compound, gothic-arch sheltered by a portico; symmetrically spaced, multi-paned windows with stone surrounds; and the more Gothic-inspired steeply pitched roof.



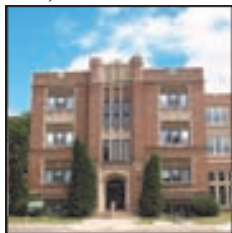
A10) O'Kelly Hall (1947; Medical Science Building) -



Built in two stages, the western half in 1947 and the eastern half in 1952, the building is a prime example of post World War II expansion of the University and the Collegiate Gothic design style that would dominate

campus architecture for several decades. The School of Medicine was a two-year program from 1905 to 1973, when it became a fully accredited four-year program. O'Kelly Hall is named for Bernard O'Kelly, long-time dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

A11) Gillette Hall (1918; Chemistry Building) - Historic



home to chemistry and biology, Gillette was designed by F. W. Keith of Fargo and was the first of the Collegiate Gothic style buildings on campus. It is named for John M. Gillette, founding professor and first chair of the Department of Sociology.

A12) Education Building (1954) -

Designed by the Grand Forks firm of Wells Denbrook in the prevailing Collegiate Gothic style, the Education Building features a central projecting tower with corner parapets extending up into battlements; the vertical stonework ends with finials along the flat roof. The connecting building between Education and Gillette was added in 2011.



A13) Harrington Hall (1952) - Southernmost of the five



Collegiate Gothic style buildings that comprise the east side of the Central Court, Harrington houses

engineering departments and is named for Louis Harrington, a former dean of the College of Engineering.

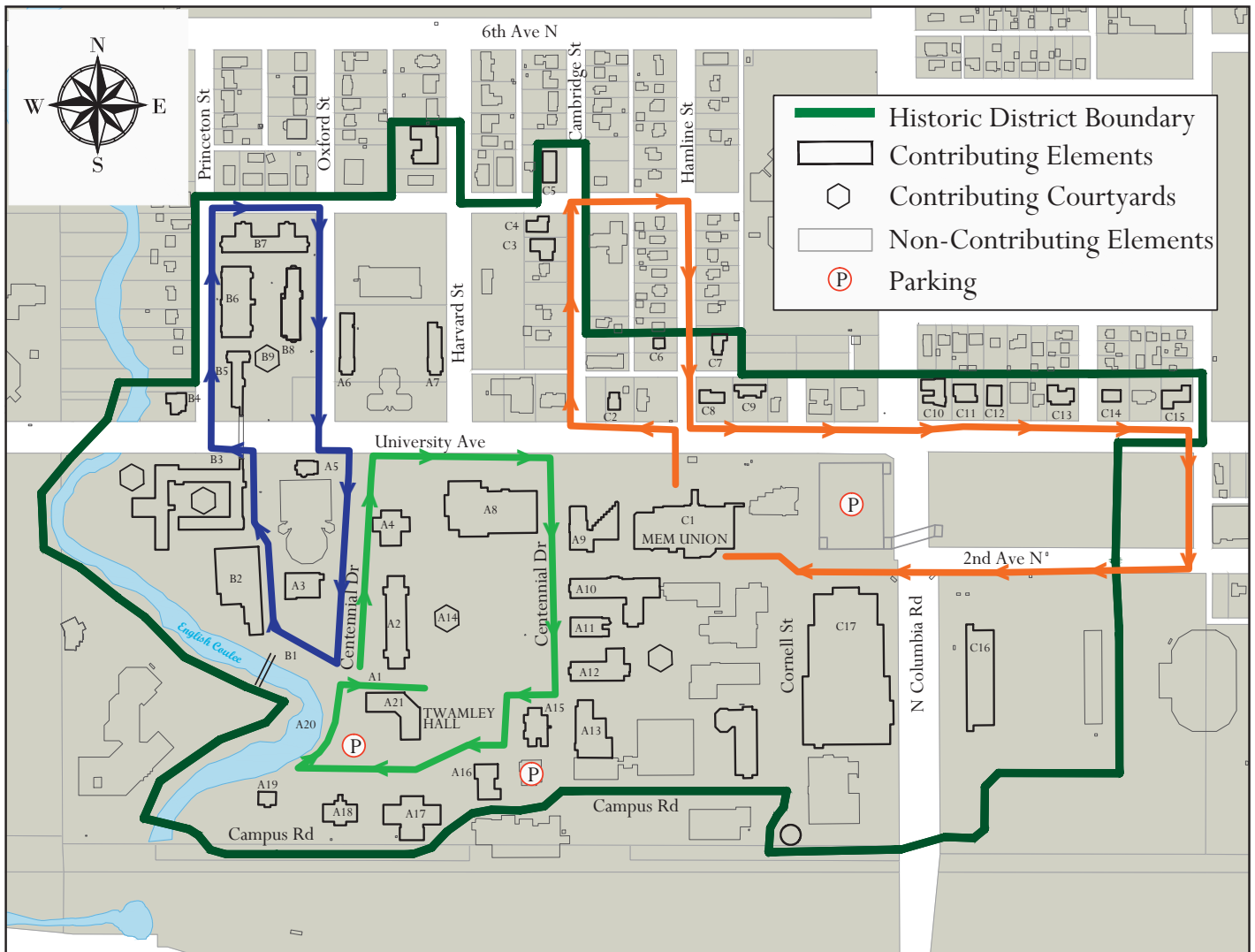
A14) Central Court -

The earliest landscape designs for UND envisioned a central park-like area for gathering and contemplation. The “quad” is the largest of five open areas that are contributing elements in the Historic District.



University of North Dakota Historic District

Grand Forks, ND



Map provided by City of Grand Forks GIS Services

Route A: North from the Old Main Memorial Sphere explores the core campus including Merrifield Hall, the Law School, Babcock Hall and the Central Quad.

Route B: NW from the English Coulee near Twamley Hall explores the oldest building on campus, Chandler Hall, as well as the mid-century residence halls.

Route C: NW from the north entrance of the Memorial Union explores the sorority and fraternity houses, Memorial Stadium and the Fieldhouse.

A15) Babcock Hall (1908; School of Mines) - Designed by noted local architect, Joseph Bell DeRemer, Babcock's Jacobethan style is evident in the steeply raked



roof, the round arches of the doors, windows and entry porch, and in the use of terra-cotta and stone trim. Babcock has a storied past as the home of North Dakota lignite research and Margaret Kelly Cable's UND Pottery. The building is named for Earle J. Babcock, Director of the School of Mines and the first state geologist.

A16) Carnegie Library (1908; Commons, Home Economics) - UND has one of eleven Carnegie libraries built in North Dakota (two were in Grand Forks), but library needs soon



outgrew the facility and it became the dining hall and then home to the home economics department. The Classical Revival style is evident in the symmetrical features and Greek-

inspired detailing of the stone pilasters and curved pediment at the central entrance, the stone window surrounds with prominent keystones, and the hipped roof. Patton and Miller of Chicago designed both the library and a 1910 master plan for the campus that emphasized the Central Court with the Carnegie at its apex.

A17) Armory (1918; Drill Hall, Men's Gymnasium, ROTC Hall) - This low-slung Tudor Revival style building was constructed by the U.S. War Department during WWI to serve as a covered drill ground for new recruits. The west end addition was completed in 1924. The size and open plan of the Armory also made it useful for commencement, convocations and other large gatherings.



A18) ND Museum of Art (1907; Gymnasium, Women's Gym, West Gym) - This Tudor Revival design with Beaux Arts elements demonstrates the design versatility of architect



Joseph Bell DeRemer. His work on campus includes Colonial Revival, Jacobethan, Collegiate Gothic, and Tudor Revival

style buildings, all representative of the periods in which they were built. The limestone and glass entrance is not original.

A19) Gustafson Hall (1908; Varsity Bachelors' Club House, Phi Delta Theta) - This first fraternity house on campus is clearly Tudor Revival style in its steeply pitched roof, dormer windows, and stucco and half-timbering elements. It was designed by Joseph Bell DeRemer and was home to the Phi Delts until 1979, at which time the Division of Continuing Education moved in. The building is named for Ben G. Gustafson, the first dean of Continuing Education. The house was pressed into service as a hospital during the devastating influenza epidemic of 1918.



Gustafson Hall with English Coulee in foreground
ca. 1910

A20) English Coulee - The coulee is a defining landscape feature of the campus and, as such, is a contributing element in the historic district.

A21) Twamley Hall (1962) - Twamley was among the last



buildings completed during the post-WWII construction surge and exhibits a more restrained Collegiate Gothic style. Twamley was

built to house the administrative functions of Old Main, which was demolished upon Twamley's completion. The building is named for James Twamley, who helped bring UND to Grand Forks.

Route B

See Map in Centerfold

Begin at the English Coulee by Twamley Hall, 264 Centennial Drive

(Historic building names and build dates are in parentheses.)

B1) Fox Memorial Bridge (1965) and English Coulee -

Gifted to the University by Ernest Fox and named in memory of his wife Alice, the bridge provides access from the historic campus to newer construction west of the English Coulee. It is a

contributing structure in the historic district.

(47° 55.217' N | 97° 04.484' W)



B2) Chandler Hall (1899; Power House, Mechanical Engineering Hall) -



The oldest section of Chandler, the one-story southern wing, is the only extant building on campus dating to the 19th century. Multiple additions from 1902 through the 1930s replicated the subdued Italianate style, which is evident in the round-top windows with hood moldings, corner quoins, and the low roof. The soft yellow brick is probably from one of the many early brickyards in Grand Forks.

B3) Johnstone, Fulton & Smith Halls (1952, 1956, 1963)

- This three-dormitory complex was designed by Grand Forks architects Wells and Denbrook in the prevalent Collegiate Gothic style. Residence halls were built throughout this period in response to rapidly growing enrollment. The open mall at the center of this complex is also a contributing feature in the historic district.



Johnstone Lounge, circa 1958

B4) *Gamma Phi Beta Sorority (1930)* - Tudor Revival

style is popular among the Greek houses. It is embellished here with the charming two-story turret entrance, brick saw-tooth patterns, multiple roof pitches, dormers, stucco and false half-timbering.



B5) *Hancock Hall (1952)* - Following in his father's footsteps, Samuel Teel DeRemer designed this Collegiate Gothic style dormitory to blend with the existing campus.

B6) *Squires Hall (1963)* -

Designed in the Collegiate Gothic style by Wells Denbrook of Grand Forks, Squires was especially important to students because it housed the campus dining hall.



B7) *Walsh Hall (1959)* - The Gothic-arched entries set



within projecting towers combine with the crenelated parapets and pilasters to create one of the more interesting Collegiate Gothic facades among the residence halls. George H. Walsh, for whom the building is named, was a primary founder of the University of North Dakota.

B8) *Bek Hall (1957)* - The Gothic-arched entrances and

stone surrounds on its windows identify the Collegiate Gothic design by the Grand Forks firm of DeRemer, Harrie and Kennedy.



B9) *Bek Courtyard* -

This open space is laid out in early University landscape plans. It provides an area for rest and contemplation or for games and socializing. The Courtyard is a contributing feature of the historic district. Bek Hall is at right in this picture of the Courtyard.

Bek Hall, at right, and Bek Courtyard

Return to the starting point at the Coulee by following Centennial Drive southward.

Route C

See Map in Centerfold

Begin at north entrance of Memorial Union, 2901 University Avenue

(Historic building names and build dates are in parentheses.)

C1) Memorial Union (1951; University Center) -

Built and named to commemorate students, staff and faculty who have given their lives in service to our country, the Union exhibits architecture



Circa 1952

transitioning from Collegiate Gothic to Modern.

The vertical elements of Collegiate Gothic remain but with the modern tendency for much less ornamentation. The 1964 Wells Denbrook addition maintains the look established by Grosz and Anderson, the 1951 design firm, but the 1982 addition on the far west is much more horizontal and modern. (47° 55.313' N | 97° 04.148' W)

C2) 2912 University Avenue (1911) - Built by Sigma Chi as



its first house, it became home to Sigma Nu from 1918 to 1926 and to Chi Omega from 1926 to 1941. The Classical Revival style is seen in the symmetry of the window and entry placement and in the classical columns.

C3) Theta Chi Fraternity (1954; Pi Kappa Phi) -

By mid-century the fraternities and sororities were adopting more modern architecture. Inclusion in the historic district demonstrates the continued growth and popularity of Greek societies on campus.



C4) Pi Beta Phi Sorority (1928) - Tudor Revival elements



of stucco and half-timbering, patterned brickwork, steeply pitched roof and dormers are all evident in this graceful Theodore Wells design. Pi Beta Phi sorority was established at UND in 1921.

C5) *Alpha Chi Omega Sorority (1947)* - The sorority relocated from University Avenue, building this charming Colonial Revival style house, which was enlarged in the 1970s, more than doubling its size. Symmetry and clean lines are typical of the style.



C6) *Women's Center (1908)* - Constructed as a private residence, this American Four-square with Craftsman elements served as the Chi Omega House from 1923 to 1926 and as the Sigma Kappa House from 1926 to 1935.



C7) *Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity (1920)* - This house is the only example of Dutch Colonial Revival style on campus and one of relatively few in Grand Forks. The Gambrel roof line, broken in this case by a single shed dormer, and the symmetry of the window placement are hallmarks of the style.



C8) *Sigma Chi Fraternity (1921)* - The growing popularity of Greek living led the Sigma Chi to build a larger house. The symmetry of Colonial Revival lends itself to the accommodation of many bedrooms and large communal spaces.



C9) *Sigma Nu Fraternity (1926)* - This Tudor Revival house, designed by Joseph Bell DeRemer, embodies almost all of the style's hallmarks. Multiple finishes include patterned brick cladding, stucco with half-timbering in the gable ends, and stone surrounds on doors and windows. The crenelated parapet on the west addition, the flattened Gothic-arch entry, prominent chimneys, balanced cross gables and multi-paned windows all speak to Tudor Revival.



C10) *Delta Gamma Sorority (1926)* - The elements of Tudor Revival style are expressed in this English cottage inspired design by Joseph Bell DeRemer. Prominent half-timbering, stucco, brick and stone

surrounds with the flattened Gothic-arched door all create a scaled-down homey feeling.

C11) *Alpha Phi Sorority (1928)* - This Tudor Revival style sorority house also reflects a more cottage-like style. The central, Gothic-arched entry in its round, conical-roofed portico, the herringbone brick pattern in the entry and the extruded mortar brickwork throughout are unique on campus.

C12) *Alpha Omega Newman House (1925; Delta Delta Delta Sorority)* - This Eclectic style house features spiral columns at its round arched entrance and a flat-roofed portico over the front door. The decorative dog-tooth brickwork above the door and windows and the tile roof are unusual details.

C13) *Beta Theta Pi Fraternity (1925)* - The Colonial Revival style of this house is defined by the two-story, fluted, Corinthian columns and the molded surrounds and broken pediment of the main entrance, which is painted white for accent.



C14) *Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity (1929; Alpha Chi Omega)* - Built for Alpha Chi Omega, this Tudor Revival design offers some interesting detailing, including the jerkinhead (a clipped gable) roof, which gives a thatched appearance. The mix of brick, stone and stucco create a rusticated effect and the six-sided, two-story corner turret is notable. The second-story, gable-roofed projecting bay is unique on campus and very uncommon in Grand Forks.



C15) *Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority (1923)* - The sorority was established at UND in 1911. This Colonial Revival style house was built during a period of Greek system expansion on campus. The English cross bond brick work, wide eaves and two story columns are unusual.



C16) *Memorial Stadium (1927)* - UND's first football games were held in the Stadium in 1928; track events began in 1929. The Collegiate Gothic style is defined by the fenestration and the double, arched entry doors of the main building. Architects were Wheeler and McEnary of Minneapolis, and Theodore B. Wells of Grand Forks.



ca.1930

C17) *Gymnasium / Fieldhouse (1951; Hyslop Sports Center)* -



The Collegiate Gothic style Fieldhouse was the first major Grand Forks design work of Myron Denbrook, who partnered with

Theodore B. Wells to design many of the mid-century buildings on campus.



Margaret Kelly Cable, second from left, works with students in a ceramics class. Cable Pottery, also known as UND Pottery, utilized North Dakota clay and is highly collectable. The classes were held in the School of Engineering and Mines, now Babcock Hall. A collection of Cable Pottery is on display in Hughes Fine Arts.



These glider pilots, pictured in 1942, were among the nearly 6000 military personnel, including engineers, nurses, medics and radio operators, who trained on campus during World War II.

Material for this brochure was compiled from the National Register of Historic Places nomination by Michelle L. Dennis, written and photographed by Peg O'Leary, edited by Sandy Slater and Marsha Gunderson.

Historic pictures courtesy of the
University of North Dakota Elwyn B. Robinson
Department of Special Collections