

ARCHITECTURE

Stroll down one block of **Bowdoin Street** and see America's changing tastes of popular house styles between the Civil War and First World War.

Italianate architecture (1840s - 1870s) is a picturesque style loosely based on rural houses of Italy. It is characterized by decorative eave brackets, bay windows, and wide porches or elaborate door hoods (78 & 79 Bowdoin).



The **Second Empire** style (1860s - 1870s) comes from France where the mansard roof popular in the 1600s was reintroduced. Similar in form to Italianate houses, this style's telltale sign is its boxy roof (69 Bowdoin).

Stick houses (1860s - 1880s) emphasize walls as important decorative elements. Prior styles applied decoration to doors, windows, eaves, and porches. Horizontal, vertical, and diagonal wall bands are common (93 & 103 Bowdoin).

Queen Anne (1880s - 1890s) is the style most considered "Victorian". Irregular massing of house and roof, decorative shingles, and porches with turned columns and spindles are hallmarks of this English import (83 Bowdoin; 1046 & 1054 Worthington).

The **Shingle** style (1890s - 1900s) spread across the nation from posh summer resorts in the Northeast. Leading architects molded what has been called "the most original American style." Plain shingled walls is its primary characteristic (62 Bowdoin).

Colonial Revival (1890s - 1990s) is our most enduring style. The Centennial Celebration of 1876 renewed interest in early architecture. Revival houses often have multi-pane windows, semi-circular fan lights, and classically detailed doorways (70 Bowdoin).

Tudor Revival (1900s - 1990s) is second only to Colonial Revival in longevity. It harkens back to medieval English architecture with half timbering, stucco, diamond-pane windows, and elaborate chimneys (1063 Worthington).

Arts & Crafts (1900s-1910s) houses share the same origin as Tudor Revival homes but are simpler in design, evoking images of cottages rather than manor houses (86 & 104 Bowdoin).

PLACES OF NOTE

McKnight is full of beautiful homes, many of which have undergone artificial siding removal, porch restoration, and fanciful paint jobs. Here are just a few to see:

- 1) **1030 Worthington (Italianate, c. 1850)** predates the McKnight development. It was built for George Kibbe, proprietor of the Kibbe Candy Company. In 1894, new owner Sigmund Levison, a local milliner from Hochberg, Germany, added the then-popular classical details.
- 2) **1104 Worthington (Queen Anne, 1886)** was built for \$15,000. One of the most expensive houses in McKnight, it is also the tallest house in the city. William Harris, president of Bausch and Harris Machine Tool Company and two-term alderman, was its owner.
- 3) **28 Ingersoll (Queen Anne, 1888)** was built for Dr. Nathan Adams who died before its completion. His family, however, lived here for nearly forty years. A subsequent owner was James Gill, president of the Peerless Handcuff Company and police commissioner.



- 4) **29 Ingersoll (Queen Anne, 1887)** was built for Lyman Besse, a pioneer in establishment of chain stores. After the turn of the century, its exterior was extensively remodeled with stucco walls and granite porch. Subsequent owners were James and Abby Gill, local art dealers. Note its porte-cochere and carriage house.

HISTORY

This charming garden district was first called "the Highlands." Later it became known as "McKnight" after the brothers who built it into the largest intact, wood-frame, Victorian residential area in New England.

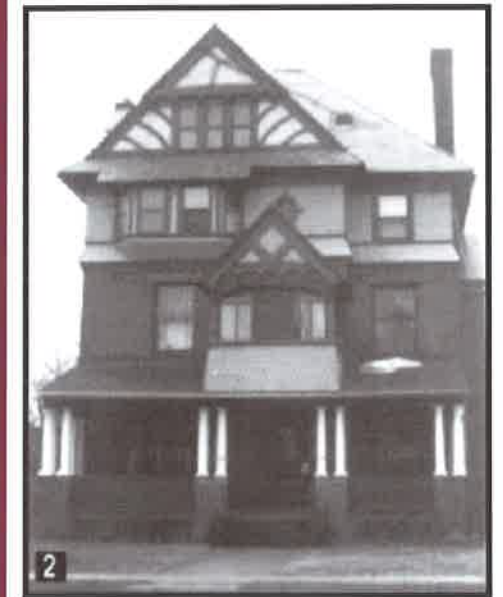
Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it has always been appreciated as a pleasant place to live. Before the Civil War there were some scattered farms. "Jamaica," an early black community, bordered Goose Pond which is now covered by Sherman, Bowles, and Catherine Streets.

In 1870, two decades after Springfield became a city, John McKnight and Tilly Haynes bought a 22 acre farm north of State Street and began building houses with John's brother William. The project expanded in 1881 with the purchase of 200 acres north of Bay Street. Roads were laid out, small parks set aside, houses erected. Schools and churches soon followed. It was *the first totally planned residential area of size in the region*. Extension and electrification of trolley lines on State Street, Worthington Street, and Saint James Avenue in the 1890s spurred construction. The McKnights and other developers built more than 800 houses by the turn of the century.

Many of these marvels have been recently restored. Today enjoy looking at the variety of architectural styles and special gems listed under "Places of Note."

The Springfield Preservation Trust, Inc. is a private, non profit, all volunteer organization concerned with the preservation and enhancement of Springfield's built environment. For information on trust membership and events, write us at 72 Walnut Street, Springfield or call our voice mail at 747-0656
www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org

A Guide to Victorian Houses In New England's Largest Garden District



The Springfield Preservation, Trust Inc.
Welcomes You to

The McKnight District

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

*A self-guided driving/walking tour to
25 restored Victorian houses*



5) **120 Clarendon (Tudor Revival, 1907)** was designed by and for architect Guy Kirkham. He was responsible for many residential and industrial buildings in the city such as the High School of Commerce and Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.

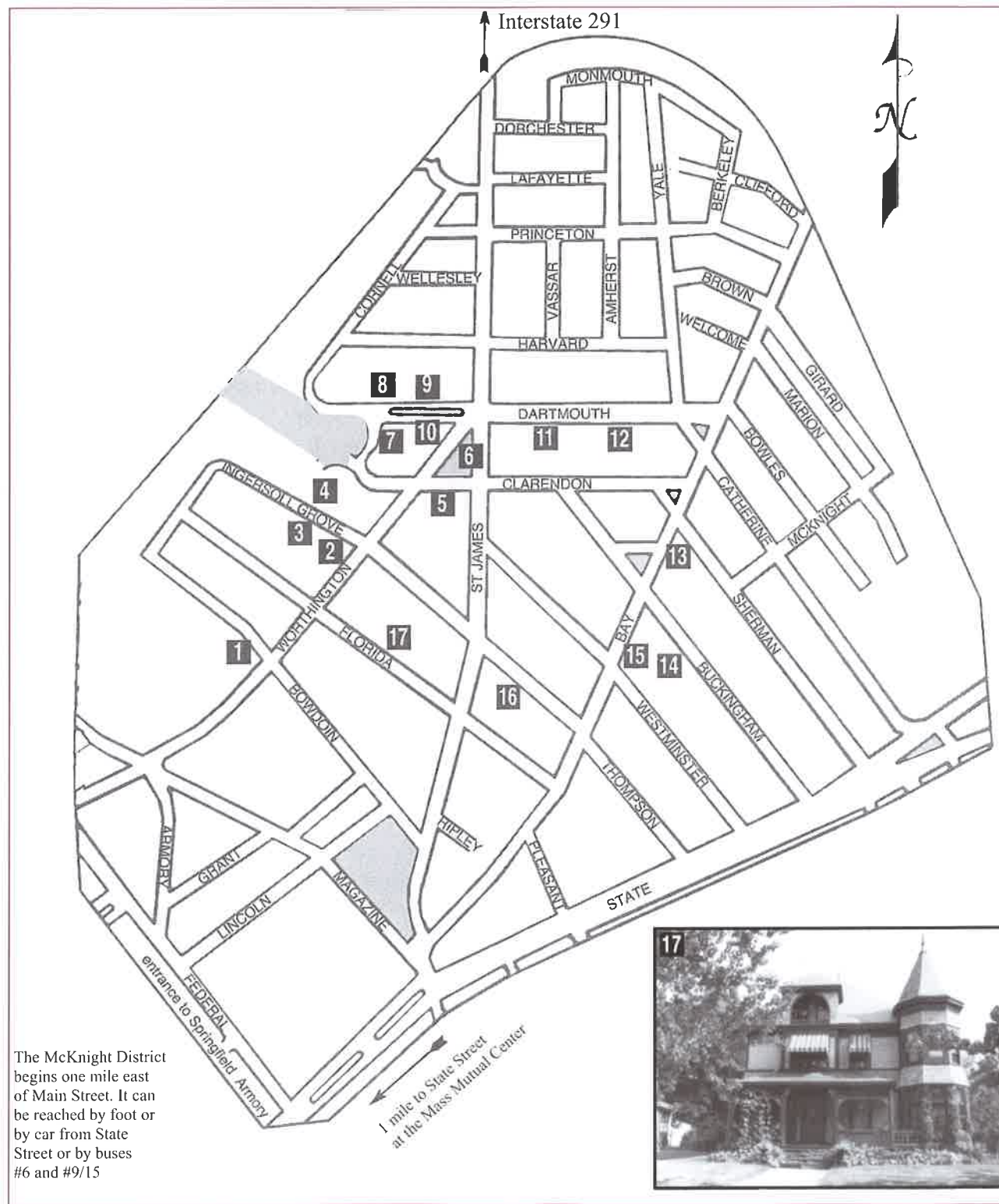
6) **Thompson Triangle** is the largest of five parks laid out by the McKnights. Its prominent location at the intersection of three major streets make it a centerpiece for the neighborhood. Renovations in 1986 added brick walks, trees, benches, and fountain.

7) **179 Clarendon (Shingle, 1894)** was built for Lillian, the only daughter of William McKnight. She married G. Wood Taylor, a young Boston architect who may have designed this house. Taylor worked closely with his father-in-law on the development of the Forest Park Heights and Ridgewood areas.



8) **153 Dartmouth (Colonial Revival, 1908)** was built after most of the neighborhood. Edgar Bliss, president of Worthy Paper Company, was its first owner and lived here until 1942.

9) **129 Dartmouth (Stick/Queen Anne, 1888)** was built for Albert Nason, president of the Bay State Corset Company and one of the founders of the Board of Trade. The original terrace fountain was presented by him to the city.



The McKnight District begins one mile east of Main Street. It can be reached by foot or by car from State Street or by buses #6 and #9/15

10) **1176 Worthington (Shingle, 1890)** was the home of William McKnight, one of the developers of the area. William built many of the houses while his brother John laid out the streets and did the landscaping.

11) **80 Dartmouth (Queen Anne, 1891)** was first owned by Henry Safford. In 1865, Safford was staying in a Washington, D.C. rooming house near Ford's Theater. He offered the house as a place to take the mortally wounded Lincoln and was present at the president's death.

12) **36 Dartmouth (Queen Anne, 1886)** was built for Ezekiel M. Ezekiel, one of the few Confederate veterans in Springfield. Born in Virginia to a prominent Jewish family, Ezekiel came north and was a salesman for the Crockett Company, varnish manufacturers. He served on the first Police Commission.

13) **Tapley School (Romanesque Revival, 1887)** is the major landmark building of McKnight. It is by F.R. Richmond, who designed numerous schools and fire stations in the city. A large addition was made in 1910. Long vacant and deteriorated, the school has been renovated into apartments.

14) **92 Buckingham (Stick/Queen Anne, 1880)** was first owned by the Lyman family. James Naismith boarded here from 1892 through 1894. He taught at the YMCA International Training School--now Springfield College-- and originated the game of basketball to give his students indoor exercise during cold weather.

15) **101 Westminster (Italianate, 1873)** was built for George Robinson, who operated a private school in downtown. The house is among the first to be built during the McKnight-led development. Its rooftop belvedere, or cupola, is a most distinguishing feature.

16) **118 Thompson (Queen Anne, 1891)** was first owned by Frank Strickland. He served as treasurer of the Emory Manufacturing Company, a local foundry, and then the Burtworth Carpet Company.

17) **97 Florida (Queen Anne, 1887)** Sits on one of the few large lots in McKnight. It was the residence of Homer Bosworth, a retired condensed milk manufacturer who also served on the boards of several city businesses. Its twelve stained glass windows and large carriage house are note-worthy.

