

- 1) Downtown/Arts & Entertainment District
- 2) Broadway Historic District
- 3) Highland Park Historic District



Downtown/Arts & Entertainment District

Once it was the site of Mesquakie Indian chief Wapello's village. Now this collection of buildings dating from the 1870s to mid 20th century in downtown Rock Island is known as "The District". With new and historic art and architecture, The District has become a Mecca for public art, live theater, artist studios, galleries, and more. The District is the Quad Cities' center for live music fests and other entertainment as well. Nearly every weekend, there's an event - from demonstrations of Arts on the aptly named "Gallery Hop" to heritage or music-themed festivals, such as Erin Feis or YaMakaMyWeekend, which attract folks from the entire region.



Park View Addition

An architecturally distinctive part of the larger KeyStone Neighborhood, Park View was the concept of Bert C. Frahm, a developer from Davenport. Secluded and surrounded in part by deep ravines, Park View developed much later than the surrounding area and is as distinctive for its diminutive Tudor Revival and contemporary 1920s and 1930s architecture as it is for the preponderance of brick exteriors. The original settlers of Park View engaged in a wide range of professions, from laborer to professor. They worked for Augustana College, Deere & Mansur Plowworks, the railroads, International Harvester and insurance agencies. Many were of Swedish descent. The homes these people built were modest in scale, but lavish in materials and details. This neighborhood even includes Rock Island's first Ranch style house, built in 1938!



Restoration of the historic District buildings is ongoing. The latest projects are creating loft dwellings in several buildings that have outstanding views of the riverfront or the bluffs of the city.

Broadway Historic District

This grand Victorian neighborhood is the premier historic area in Rock Island, where old houses are regarded as treasures. Great architecture, constant restorations, and a first-rate neighborhood association have made this area the place to be in the Quad Cities for old home lovers. More than 550 homes make up the Broadway collection, which features Queen Anne, Italianate and Colonial Revival architecture. The earliest homes are from 1865, but most of the area was built between 1890 and 1915, including the 1904 Robert Wagner House, which is a must-see at 904 23rd Street, and the towered Connor-Parker House at 702 20th Street. The Broadway neighborhood is listed on the National Register, hosts an outstanding Mother's Day Tour of Homes each year, features 22 Rock Island Landmarks, and is nationally famous for founding the "Great Unveiling" program, where artificial siding is removed from historic homes.



US Housing Corp - WW1 Housing

Between 1918 and 1919, over 600 houses were built in the Quad Cities by the United States Housing Corporation to provide emergency housing for war production workers. These homes were built as part of the first-ever, nation-wide initiative by the federal government to design and build civilian housing. The Rock Island District project, which included Rock Island, Moline, East Moline and Davenport, was the only project in Illinois and Iowa, the only one to span two states and the third largest completed project in the nation. Two hundred of these small, distinctive homes were built in Rock Island in just half a year during a severe labor and materials shortage due to the war. Seventeen basic designs were repeated, including pointy-gabled double houses and many gambrel roof variations. They were split between four sub-neighborhoods and built to blend in with existing housing. Rock Island architects Cervin & Stuhr designed the houses, which were masterfully built by Henry Horst & Company. To this day, not one of these homes in Rock Island has been demolished - a testament to their craftsmanship and adaptability to modern families.



Highland Park Historic District

Rock Island's wealthiest citizens made their homes in Highland Park between 1895 and 1928, which was a rural area when the first houses were constructed. All of the architectural revivals, many of which were professionally designed, are present in their highest form in this exclusive neighborhood. These styles include Colonial, Georgian, Dutch, Tudor, and Spanish. The brick streets add a special ambience to this locally designated historic district. Be sure to drive by 1920's gangster John Looney's impressive stone mansion at 1635 20th Street.



Edgewood Park / Brooks' Groves

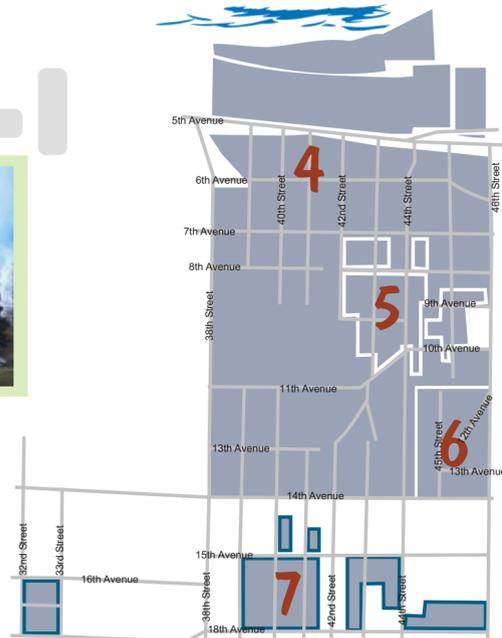
In the 1890s, lawyer and developer E.H. Guyer envisioned a new town - a "Keystone" between Rock Island and Moline. It would be marketed as a healthy, well-drained and elevated location that working families could afford. Guyer's town site had been previously platted in 1888 as Edgewood Park, and included the area between 7th and 10th Avenues and 42nd and 44th Streets. Because of a national recession in 1892-93, Guyer's utopian vision was not realized, but others, particularly William E. Brooks, saw the potential of the land, and began subdividing and building in earnest by the 1900s and 1910s. Brooks platted several additions directly east of 44th Street. The Edgewood Park and Brooks' Groves area features an amazingly wide range of architectural styles, but is characterized by the heaviest concentration of that purely Midwestern house form, the Foursquare, in all of Rock Island.



KeyStone Neighborhood

A great neighborhood in northeast Rock Island, Keystone extends from Augustana College to the Moline border, and from the Mississippi River to 14th Avenue.

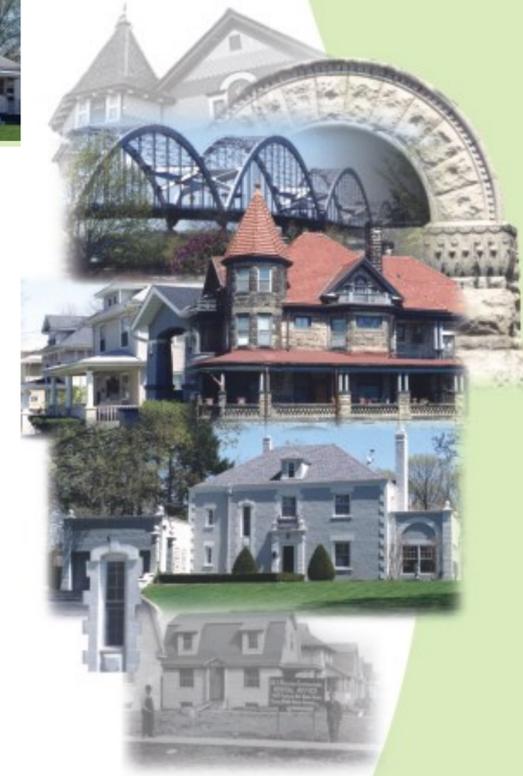
KeyStone neighborhood offers a rich variety of late nineteenth and twentieth century architectural styles - from American Foursquare to Victorian Tudor and Colonial Revival, as well as Cape Cod and Bungalows. Historically, KeyStone has been the home of some of Rock Island's most famous residents, including businessman Levi McCabe, newspaper editor Julian Ramsey, and the Swedish-American painter Olof Grafstrom. There are six sub-areas within KeyStone: Brook's Grove, College Heights, Columbia Park, Edgewood Park, Fairview, and Park View, each offering the best in urban living coupled with the feel and warmth of a "down-home" community. Located within the neighborhood is beautifully landscaped Lincoln Park offering year-round recreational opportunities including playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis, basketball and sand volleyball courts, as well as sledding hills for winter fun. Cultural activities can be found in Lincoln Park through summer concerts and ballet programs, as well as classical open-air theater provided by the Genesis Guild. Bordering KeyStone, and within walking distance, Augustana College offers plays and concerts, a museum, planetarium, and a library. KeyStone is also the home of two schools. Longfellow Elementary and Alleman High School, the only Roman Catholic high school in the Illinois Quad Cities, offer challenging educational programs. KeyStone is filled with lovely gardens and landscaping, truly earning its reputation as "the urban garden".



- 4) KeyStone Neighborhood
- 5) Edgewood Park / Brooks' Groves
- 6) Park View Addition
- 7) US Housing Corp - WW1 Housing

Stroll these Sidewalks

Discover Rock Island's Historic Neighborhoods



Westlawn Addition

“WestLawn Homes: Planned Built Sold and Guaranteed by Rock Island Men” read the 1942 promotional advertisement in *The Argus*. It went on to say: “40 Scheuerman & Kempe homes in various states of construction in Westlawn Addition. Drive out to our Westlawn Field Office on 23rd Avenue and 11th Street pick out one of Scheuerman & Kempe quality built homes with a total monthly payment that is less than the rent you are now paying. It's all so simple and easy. Let us give you the whole story and at the same time give you an 'on the job' demonstration. Also see our Westlawn Air Raid Shelter that will accommodate 300 people.”

Housing construction began in Westlawn in 1941 and the vast majority was finished in 1942. These 88 homes were intended for war defense workers. They were built in the Minimal Traditional style, but are somewhat larger than homes built about the same time at Stadium Drive. Westlawn is historically unusual because it was built up so completely in such a short time and its closely packed houses comprise a very different visual pattern from earlier developments. The Westlawn subdivision, through its new combination of curvilinear and grid street patterns, may have influenced early planned suburbs of the 1950s.



Stadium Drive

This is an excellent example of a “World War II Veterans” neighborhood in Rock Island. According to city directories, about half of this neighborhood was built up during the war, supposedly to house war defense workers. However, the big push to complete the plat came when the veterans came home by 1946. It was developed by landowner Benjamin Harris, who sold many lots to a St. Louis company, which then constructed the small distinctive brick homes.

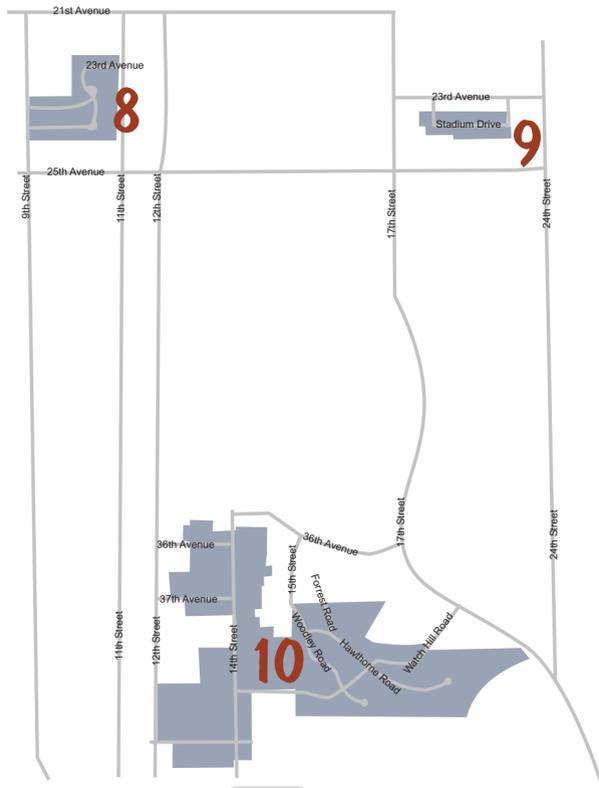


Watch Hill/Hill Crest

Watch Hill addresses today are among the most prestigious in Rock Island. The older part of Watch Hill, historically known as Hill Crest, was extremely isolated and exclusive in 1918 when the area was platted. The rolling hillsides, curving streets, and copious shade trees make this quiet residential neighborhood a fitting complement to Black Hawk State Historic Site, which borders the neighborhood. Expensive and elaborate homes were built in Watch Hill from the 1920s to the 1950s. Fourteenth Street contains some of the most outstanding residences in the City. This is an enjoyable car or bike ride for architecture and nature enthusiasts.



- 8) Westlawn Addition
- 9) Stadium Drive
- 10) Watch Hill/Hill Crest



Wheelan's Addition

Appearing deceptively small, these brick homes are some of the most elaborate built in 1930 in Rock Island. Their common features include open or exposed front porch terraces, which are unusual in this region, and prominent windows, many with arches. This small collection of Spanish Colonial Revival houses is attributed to prolific local builder Sam Weisman. Isador Pesses owned the home at 2401 21st Avenue for 38 years. He was the co-founder of Eagle Kash & Karry, which grew to 115 stores as the Eagle Food Centers chain by the mid-1980s and at the turn of the 21st century employed nearly 5,000 people.



- 11) Wheelan's Addition
- 12) Weisman's Subdivision
- 13) Burgart's Additions
- 14) Eastlawn Addition



Weisman's Subdivision

Sam Weisman arrived in Rock Island before WWI as a poor Russian immigrant. At his death in 1948, he was one of our most acclaimed citizens, renowned for the quality of his construction as well as his personal integrity. His buildings ranged from large apartments to fine homes such as these seven. Built around 1930, they are “Chicago-style” bungalows, which show Tudor Revival and Arts and Crafts features. Interiors are surprisingly spacious and designed for gracious living. Note the leaded glass windows; some in this small distinct area feature metallic gold accents.



Burgart's Additions

Joseph Burgart farmed this part of Rock Island for 45 years before he finished subdividing the land, piece at a time, for housing development. Joseph's own house is the prominent Foursquare located at 2700 21st Avenue. The subdivisions started near 30th Street in the 1920s, and gradually worked their way west, ending with the 1940s and 50s construction of Hill Crest Court. The 29th and 30th Street areas are a veritable walking tour of Tudor Revival architecture of the period. The later, western houses on Hill Crest Court and 28th Street feature Colonial Revival variations, Minimal Traditional house types and one notable International style house.



Eastlawn Addition

Eastlawn was started in 1945 by noted local developers Scheuerman & Kempe. The plat is located in southeastern Rock Island, and at the time of its development lay well beyond the outer edge of the expanding residential boundary. A decade later, the addition was still by itself out in the country. These postwar houses are more elaborate in ornamentation than others constructed during the war, and most are partly brick veneered. Colonial Revival, Cape Cod and Minimal Tradition house forms make up the collection.



Why You Should "Stroll These Sidewalks"

Rock Island's historic neighborhoods - those more than 50 years old - are richly diverse in background and architecture. A stroll of these sidewalks will take you from an exciting, arts enriched downtown to streets lined with Victorian gems to neighborhoods with important ties to World War I and World War II. You will see grand homes built by early commerce barons, but you will also visit cottages built for Rosie the Riveter.

While a few of these areas are well known, some are 20th century neighborhoods that are only now being considered historic. With this publication, the Rock Island Preservation Commission and City of Rock Island seek to encourage the appreciation of *all* of our city's historic neighborhoods.

To learn more about Rock Island's neighborhoods, please visit the City of Rock Island web site at www.rigov.org/neighborhoods.html. That page contains links to neighborhood associations and the many other tours and publications offered by the Rock Island Preservation Commission that historic architecture enthusiasts would enjoy. Some of these 14 neighborhoods were identified in a 276-page study titled *Rock Island's Historic Residential Neighborhoods, 1835 - 1935: A Summary Report*, which was commissioned by the Rock Island Preservation Commission and written by James E. Jacobsen. It is available for purchase at Rock Island City Hall.

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