

George McMorrان

George McMorrان was a very successful businessman, from the beginning of his partnership with Carl Washburne in 1910 until McMorrان sold his shares to Washburne in 1937. They started in the dry goods industry working from a single small room. Within a year of opening, McMorrان and Washburne became one of the most popular stores in Eugene. In 1921 they relocated to the Tiffany Building (then known as the Cockerline and Weatherbee building) on the northeast corner of 8th Avenue and Willamette Street. This building is still intact and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Willamette Street, from 9th Avenue, August 25, 1936
McMorrان & Washburne Store at far right

It was around this particularly prosperous time for the store that both George McMorrان and Carl Washburne purchased their large residential properties in the Fairmount neighborhood and designed and built their homes there.

Soon the partnership shifted its focus from dry goods to become a fully-fledged department store and this, along with the store's immediate success necessitated still larger premises. They purchased the southwest corner lot on Willamette and East Broadway in 1924. They razed the existing building and hired A.E. Doyle, an extremely successful Portland architect, to design the McMorrان and Washburne Department Store. The grand opening on September 3, 1927 drew a crowd of more than 23,000 people. The store continued to operate until 1939 when the department store was sold to J.C. Penney. It had been the "longest operating and last remaining locally owned department store in Eugene." (McMorrان and Washburne Department Store History and Evaluation.)

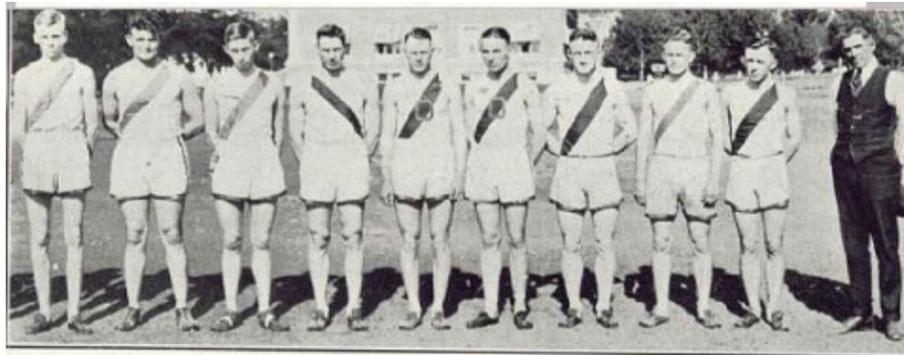
Roscoe Deleur Hemenway: Architect



Roscoe Deleur Hemenway was born in Cottage Grove, Oregon on February 12 1899. He later moved to Portland and attended Portland public schools before entering the University of Oregon. Upon graduation from the University of Oregon, Hemenway moved to Philadelphia and most likely began practicing architecture there. He returned to Oregon in about 1923 and began practicing in Portland.

A job list of Hemenway's work at the Oregon Historical Society shows that he specialized in single-family residential architecture and designed two hundred and fifty-four houses during his thirty-six years of practice in Oregon, most of which were in Portland, where Hemenway's practice was located. Only twenty-four Hemenway-designed residences were built outside of Portland. Hemenway's clientele was largely made up of the Portland elite, who lived in the prestigious neighborhoods of Portland's west hills as well as Laurelhurst, Alameda, Dunthorpe, and Lake Oswego.

The McMorrان House, one of his early projects, is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival and Norman Farmhouse styles. Hemenway designed at least one other residence in Eugene, also a period revival style building, which was Hemenway's forte. The Psi Alpha Chi Omega Sorority House located at 1461 Alder Street has housed the sorority for over seventy-five years. It was built in 1926, one year after the completion of the McMorrان House. The Psi Alpha Chi Omega Sorority House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places both as an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style and as the finest (and potentially the only) example of a Jacobethan Revival style building in Eugene.



graduate manager, Harry Hargreaves, Emerald Sloan, Dick Sundeleaf, Roscoe Hemenway, Scotty Strachan, Sidney Hayslip, Art Kuhnhausen, Henry Foster, Leith Abbott, Floyd
UO Track Team - Hemenway, third player from right. 1921 Oregon

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University of Oregon
Campus Planning, Design and Construction
(541) 346-5562

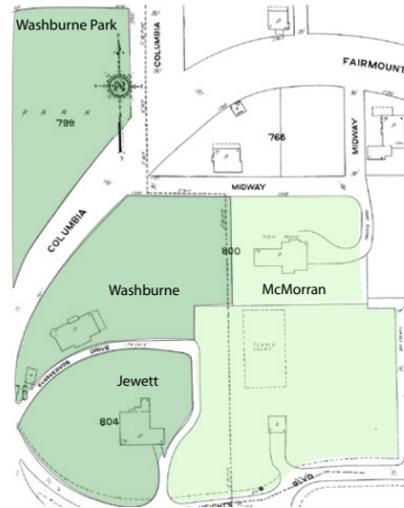
McMorrان House & Garden



The McMorrان House was built for George McMorrان in 1925 during a time when Eugene was experiencing its largest building and population boom, in accordance with the designs of a respected architect and landscape architect. Roscoe D. Hemenway, a UO graduate and an acclaimed Portland architect known for his period revival style residential work, designed the McMorrان House. The expansive gardens are likely the work of George H. Otten, another UO graduate and well-known Oregon landscape architect. George McMorrان was a man who greatly influenced the commercial life of Eugene and was also deeply involved in the organization and life of the community. He sold the house to the University of Oregon in 1941. Every resident thereafter has been a president of the University of Oregon and, therefore, has had a profound impact on the university.

The McMorrans House and Fairmount

At the time the house was built, the Fairmount neighborhood was newly established. The McMorrans Estate was one of at least four large estates occupying much of the land around the Fairmount Loop. Before the 1920s, these properties were owned by fruit growers, and orchards occupied the land. All were built on the steeply sloping land with panoramic views of the city below. The McMorrans also built the “community” tennis courts on the land south of their house (see Sanborn map - p. 3). A glimpse of these tennis courts can be seen in the 1929 film “Ed’s Coed” produced by students at the University of Oregon.

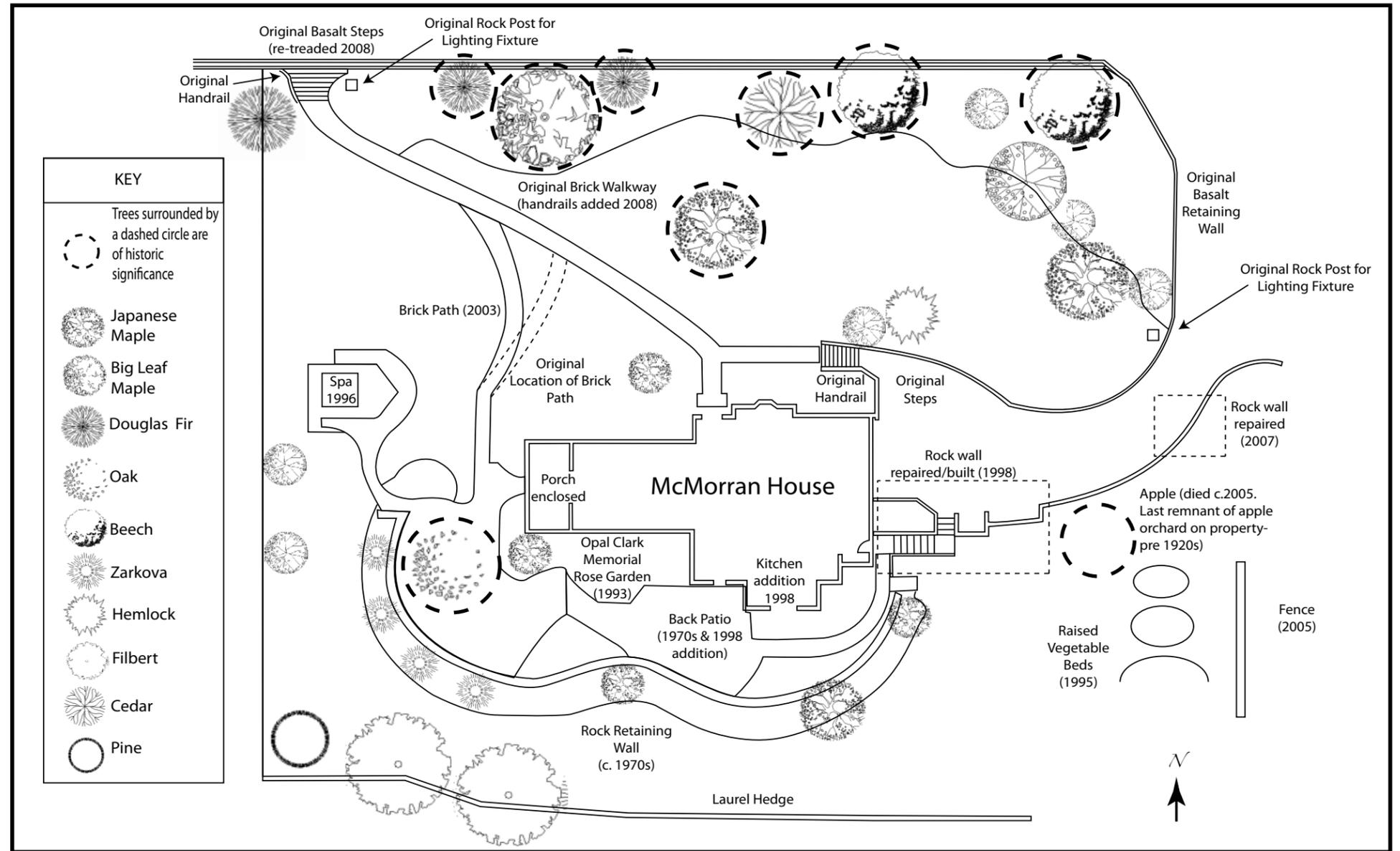


The adjacent estates were the Hampton Church House (also known as Treetops and now the Chancellor’s House), the Washburne Estate, and the Fellman Jewett Residence. The McMorrans, Washburnes, and Jewetts were linked by familial and business ties. George McMorrans had a successful business partnership with Carl Washburne that flourished for over 25 years. The Washburnes and Jewetts were related by marriage.

The McMorrans house has been well cared for by the University of Oregon since 1941. All repairs and remodels to the house and gardens have been carefully monitored to preserve the original character and style of the house. Continued care of the McMorrans House will ensure that this historically significant resource will be preserved and available for use by successive University of Oregon presidents and the campus community for many years to come.



Formal dining room - 1932



The house is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival/Norman Farmhouse style. This is exemplified by a very prominent front façade; a varied, steeply-pitched, hipped roof massing; subordinate cross gables; and decorative brickwork on the front façade and on the two massive chimneys. The main entrance is articulated with cast-stone trim surrounding a Tudor arch and projecting into the surrounding brickwork. The cross-gable houses a semi-hexagonal oriel window, which is multi-paned, as are all the other casement and double-hung windows throughout the house.



Since 1941 eight of ten university presidents and their families have occupied the house during their terms of service to the University of Oregon.

- Donald and Roxanne Erb 1941-43
- Harry and Leigh Newburn 1945-54
- O. Meredith and Marian Wilson 1954-60
- Arthur and Bernice Flemming 1961-68
- Robert and Opal Clark 1969-1975
- William Boyd 1975-80 (lived in another residence but used the McMorrans House for university and public functions)
- Paul and Vivian Olum 1981-89 (lived in another residence but used the McMorrans House for university and public functions)
- Myles and Peg Brand 1989-94
- David and Lynn Frohmayer 1994-2009
- Richard and Jan Lariviere 2009-2011
- Robert M. Berdahl 2011-2012 interim
- Michael R and Karol Gottfredson 2012-2014
- Scott and Wendy Coltrane, 2014 - 2015, interim
- Michael H. Schill, 2015 - present