

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House

other names/site number Eta Chapter of Beta Theta Pi

#### 2. Location

street & number 114 South Columbia Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Chapel Hill vicinity N/A  
state North Carolina code NC county Orange code 135 zip code 27514

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Brown SHPO 3/4/05  
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u>    </u> entered in the National Register <u>    </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u>    </u> determined eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u>    </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u>    </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u>    </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u>    </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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<u>    </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u>    </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u>    </u> other (explain): _____		

Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House

Orange County, North Carolina

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
**Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
In the National Register

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/education-related housing

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/education-related housing

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Southern Colonial Revival

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**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

roof asphalt

walls brick

other wood

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)  
See attached continuation sheets.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1929-1954

**Significant Dates**

1929

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown - architect  
McAlester, B., builder

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- X** State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- X** University
- Other

Name of repository:

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property .99 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>6 75</u>	<u>450</u>	<u>39 75 922</u>	3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
						See continuation sheet		

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title April Montgomery, Principal

organization Circa, Inc date October 15, 2004

street & number PO Box 28365 telephone 919/ 834-4757

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27611

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items  
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Wooglin Foundation, Inc.

street & number 3320 Pennington Lane telephone 336/659-9972

city or town Winston- Salem state NC zip code 27106

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House  
Orange Co., NC

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

**Setting:**

The Beta Theta Pi Fraternity house is located at 114 South Columbia Street. University Baptist Church and its parking lot are next to the house to the north. Five fraternity houses on Fraternity Court are to the south of the house and separated by a narrow drive that leads to parking for the Beta Theta Pi House as well as those houses on Fraternity Court. Across South Columbia Street to the east are the Ackland Museum of Art and the Hanes Art Center. Farther south and east is the University of North Carolina while the Town of Chapel Hill lies to the north beyond the Baptist Church.

The house enjoys a deep setback from the street, which enables mature trees to adorn the landscape. The house evokes the feeling of a southern mansion centered on a large lot accented by mature plantings. A 1962 frame annex stands at the rear of the property. A boxwood hedge shields the house from South Columbia Street. The adjacent church parking lot is separated from the house lot by a wooden fence. A brick walk leads from the sidewalk to the front entrance of the house.

**Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House Exterior:**

The Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House is a two-and-one-half-story, five-bay wide brick house with full basement. It is three bays deep. One-bay, lower two-and-one-half-story brick wings capped with gambrel roofs flank the main block. The roof of the main block is a modified side-gable roof. The profile slopes like a gable but instead of meeting at an apex the top flattens out. Full-height Doric columns support the full-width, flat-roof portico. The Greek letters for Beta Theta Pi are centered on the entablature of the portico. A keystone caps a central door surrounded by sidelights and transom. Four sets of wooden French doors open onto the portico. Each set of doors is surmounted by a flat brick arch and keystone. The second floor façade windows are all double-hung six-over-six sash windows with brick flat arches with keystones. The attic story contains five gabled, pedimented dormers with double-hung, six-over-six wood sash windows. The rear elevation of the main block contains identical windows at the first and second stories, and identical dormers in the attic.

The north wing is one-bay-wide, two-and-a-half-stories tall with identical fenestration to the main block. The first story originally contained a recessed porch with round-arched openings. These openings have been infilled with a French door and fanlight on the front, and with sash windows on the side and rear elevations. Centered at the top of the side elevation is a rectangular-shaped vent.

The south wing, originally one-story, was raised to two-and-one-half stories circa 1962 to mirror the north wing. The first story was originally a porte cochere with round-arched openings. The front, side and rear openings are now infilled with French doors with blind fanlights. The second

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story has a central one-over-one double-hung window flanked by two, six-over-six, double-hung windows, with flat brick arches and keystones. A metal fire escape is attached to the wall below the central window. Two double-hung, six-over-six windows with flat arches and keystones mark the third floor. The west window allows access to the third floor fire escape. Also evident on the first story of the south side elevation of the main block, east of the wing and next to the portico is a stair leading to another basement door. The door has nine panels and is set in a deeply recessed frame. A metal grate has replaced the central panel.

The rear or west elevation has the same form as the front minus the porch. The first story has a central door reached by a narrow stair with metal balustrade and handrail. The door was originally a French door that was replaced with a security door. The basement level is visible from the rear and is marked on the main block by a pair of double-hung one-over-one windows. Just south of the entrance stair is a stair leading to the half-glazed kitchen door. A one-story flat-roofed wing projects from the south end of the rear. This wing houses the basement dining area. It has six-over-six and one-over-one double-hung windows with flat brick arches with keystones. An infilled door is adjacent to the kitchen door. A brick wall extends south from the southwest corner of the rear wing to the parking area.

**Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House Interior:**

The front entrance to the house opens into a center hall. The hall continues though the house to the rear entrance. The living room is located to the right of the main hall. The focal point of this room is the wood fireplace mantel with paneled pilasters supporting the shelf and a central panel adorning the entablature. Cased openings flank the central fireplace and lead to the former porch. The porch was enclosed in the 1960s. The original arched openings are now filled with arched windows and French doors. The original brick walls have been covered with sheetrock but the original quarry tile remains as the flooring for the room. The south wall, which backs up to the living room fireplace, is still exposed brick. Just left of the hall is the trophy room. A simple wood mantel marks the fireplace on the south side of this room. Reeded pilasters support the mantelshelf, which is adorned underneath by a Greek Key. The center plaque is in honor of a fallen brother and reads,

Milton Stanley Storm, Jr.  
Dec. 15, 1932-Sept. 19, 1953

Plain slate faces the firebox surround. Two niches flank the fireplace. Wood floors with wooden baseboards finish the rooms on the floor. An arched opening marks the center of the hall and the intersection with the stair hall to the south. The stair was replaced in 1962 and consists of metal balusters, a wide wooden handrail, and wooden treads. The stairs lead to the basement below and the rooms above. The first floor of the south wing, enclosed in 1962, is a television room.

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The basement houses a chapter room, dining room, kitchen, and storage area. The chapter room is a large room in the northeast area of the main block. A narrow hall leads to the dining hall, kitchen, and additional storage. The dining hall has ceramic tile floor, acoustical tile ceiling, three sheetrock walls and one paneled wall. The kitchen has the same ceramic tile floor as the dining room. The dropped ceiling also continues in the kitchen. An opening marked by an ogee arch leads to a bathroom in the basement.

The second and third floors are very similar in layout. They both consist of a single long hall stretching from one end of the house to the other (north to south) with a series of doors. Each door leads to a dormitory room. There are eleven dormitory rooms and one bathroom on the second floor. The third floor contains one study room, one bathroom, and ten dormitory rooms. Most of the original materials have been replaced on the second and third floors. The ceilings have been dropped and covered with acoustical tiles to cover the sprinkler system. [In May of 1996 a tragic fire claimed several lives at the Phi Gamma Delta house. This tragedy caused the University and the Greek community to become more involved with fire and safety. The 1996 Chancellor's Committee on Greek Affairs Fire Safety Task Force released a report suggesting that sprinkler systems and alarms be required in all Fraternity and Sorority Houses.] Beta Theta Pi was the first fraternity to install a sprinkler system following this tragedy (Campaign). Although the hall ceilings have been dropped to cover the sprinkler system, the original ceiling height has been maintained at the both ends of the second floor hall.

Although some of the original materials have been replaced or covered, the Beta Theta Pi house maintains its original room configuration and is true to its original floor plan. Except for the replacement stair, the 1962 additions have not taken away from the integrity of the building. Furthermore, it can be argued that the 1962 stair is representative of its time and required by building code. The enclosure of the porch and porte cochere are sympathetic alterations that are easily interpreted. The addition of the second and third floors to the porte cochere are also easily identified and by matching the north wing have maintained the character of the building.

Non-contributing Annex. 1962.

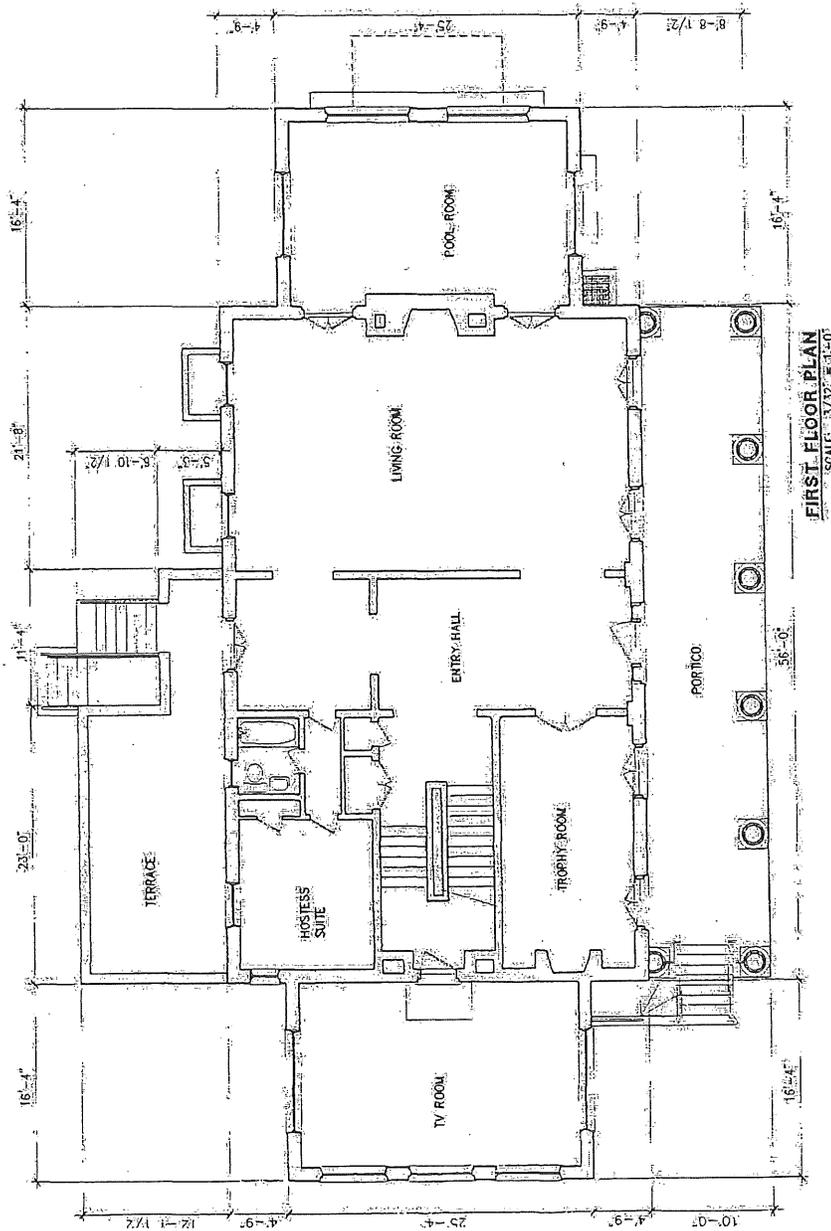
A noncontributing annex is located behind the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House. This was constructed in 1962 as a social hall. It is a wood frame building with board-and-batten siding and a gable roof, executed in a modern style with a wooden handicap ramp leading to the entrance. A large frame deck wraps around two sides.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Summary:**

The Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House, 114 Columbia Street, in Chapel Hill, is a large two-and-one-half-story brick building constructed in 1929 in the Southern Colonial Revival style. It looks east toward the university campus across a deep front lawn, with a full portico lined with French doors across its façade. Containing twenty-one bedrooms, meeting rooms, parlors, kitchen, dining room, and lounges, the house was built by B. McAlester, from Columbia, Missouri. The Beta Theta Pi House meets Criterion C for its architectural significance as one of the best examples of the Southern Colonial Revival-style fraternity houses at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill campus. It also meets Criterion A for its significance in social history as the home of the Eta Chapter of Beta Theta Pi at the university. Founded in 1852, it is one of the oldest fraternities on campus, and has played a distinguished role in Greek life at the university. The house, carefully renovated to preserve its historic architectural integrity, is significant from its construction in 1929 to 1954, the last year in which it met the fifty-year criterion of eligibility.

**Historical Background:**

Beta Theta Pi and the Eta Chapter

Beta Theta Pi was founded on September 8, 1839 at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. It was the first fraternity founded west of the Allegheny Mountains (Baird, p. 1-11). The Eta Chapter of Beta Theta Pi was chartered at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1852, making it the third fraternity chartered on campus (Eta Data, p. 3). The chapter enjoyed early success that was unfortunately short-lived due to the ensuing war and it became inactive in 1859. The University was closed from 1869 to 1875, and did not allow fraternities when it reopened. It would be 1884 before Beta Theta Pi was re-established. Prior to the war, a fraternity known as the Mystical Seven had been the strongest fraternity in the south, however, their numbers declined after the war and the Star of the South chapter at the University of North Carolina [hereafter referred to as UNC-Chapel Hill] was absorbed into the Eta Chapter of Beta Theta Pi. The remaining chapters of the Mystical Seven throughout the south became Beta Theta Pi by 1890 (Eta Data, p 3).

The turn of the century marked a new era for Beta Theta Pi at the University of North Carolina. In 1905, the Eta Chapter built a new house on the edge of campus, on the original Fraternity Row. The addition of a house for its members led to new success for the Eta Chapter. This success lasted until the dawn of World War I when again most Eta members left to serve their country. Henry Rankin was the only member of Beta Theta Pi to return to campus in the fall of 1921. By the end of the year the total number at the Eta Chapter was nine (Eta Data 1960, p. 3).

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War wasn't the only force to impact fraternity life at Chapel Hill in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The 1915 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Chapel Hill depicts the original fraternity row on the university campus. It consisted of ten houses forming an "L-shape" around the northwest corner of the library building. On January 9, 1919, fire struck and destroyed three houses, Sigma Nu, S.A.E., and Pi Kappa Phi (Wilson, p. 410). The fire threatened but did not damage other adjacent fraternity and university buildings, including the library.

After the fire, the university thought it would be best to relocate the fraternities off campus. As many of the fraternities were outgrowing their houses, the relocation would allow them to build large houses for their members. Therefore, they agreed to a land swap. This also allowed the fraternities that had lost their homes to the fire an opportunity to acquire new housing.

The Betas were also participants in this movement. The May 28, 1925 edition of the *Chapel Hill Weekly* reported, "The heirs of the late George Pickard have sold the house and lot on Columbia Street to the Beta Theta Pi fraternity for \$25,000." The article explained that the fraternity would take possession of the property on September 15 and would move the existing house, shown on the 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map as a two-story, side-gable, structure with full-width porch, flanking wings, and central rear ell. The *Chapel Hill Weekly* continued to follow the story in the September 25, 1925 edition under "Beta Builds in Spring." The article explained that the chapter had sold its house on Fraternity Row to Delta Sigma Pi, and moved twenty members into the Pickard House temporarily. In the spring of 1926 the chapter planned to move the house to the rear of the lot and to divide it into three smaller rental units. Then the new fraternity house, costing around \$50,000, will be built on the site of the Pickard House.

The architect of the house is not known. Original blueprints for the structure, dated May 17, 1929 identify the builder as B. McAlester from Columbia, Missouri. No other work in Chapel Hill by this builder is known. It is suspected that he developed stock plans for the national chapter of Beta Theta Pi and the Eta Chapter house is based on one of those designs.

The fraternity moved into the new house in 1929. It accommodated over thirty members (Barber, p. 650). The 1932 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the new Beta Theta Pi House sited in the center of the lot. Behind it appears to be the main block of the Pickard house at the southwest corner of the lot. The two wings appear to have been separated as planned and are located behind the Pickard House on the northwest corner of the lot.

The financial obligations associated with the new house meant the chapter would have to grow in membership to increase income. The fraternity met the challenge until World War II. During the war the University was used as a Naval Training Center. Many of the fraternity houses, including the Beta House, were used as quarters for midshipmen (Barber, p. 650). This impeded the fraternity's ability to grow during the war.

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The end of the war marked a period of "unparalleled expansion" at the university and fraternity levels which continued throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s (Eta Data, p. 3). The Vietnam era strained the strength of the fraternity but it maintained a moderate membership. In the 1980s and 1990s the enrollment of men at Chapel Hill was proportionately less than it had been in previous years. This had a direct effect on fraternity membership across campus. With this decline in membership came a decline in the maintenance of the house. In the mid-1990s the alumni organized a capital campaign to renovate the house. Renovations began in 1997 to update the house to meet current code and fire requirements. The renovation architect is Arthur Cogswell Jr., a Chapel Hill architect and Beta alumnus. The fraternity has gone to great lengths to ensure the preservation of the original form and plan as well as, where possible, the preservation of original materials to maintain the building's overall architectural integrity. With the renovation almost complete, the Eta Chapter of Beta Theta Pi can look forward to another seventy years in the house at 114 South Columbia Street.

**Historical Context: Greek Letter Societies in Higher Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

During the first fifty years of the University of North Carolina, the primary student organizations were the Dialectic (Di) and Philanthropic (Phi) Societies, which were primarily literary and debating societies. They grew so popular that they disallowed Juniors and Seniors in order to provide space for new members. These older students met in new, secret clubs, including the first order of Kappa Alpha, founded in 1812 (Coates, 121; Baird, I-10). The university came out against the proliferation of these secret societies (as opposed to the Di and Phi, which it supported), and in 1842, in reaction to an attempt to charter a chapter of the Mystical Seven fraternity, the trustees ordered the university to ban fraternities and demand a pledge from students that they would not connect themselves to any secret society (Johnson, 129).

Despite the trustees' opposition, secret clubs began to form in the 1850s. The Beta chapter of Delta Kappa Epsilon took its charter in April 1851, followed by the Epsilon chapter of Phi Gamma Delta in fall of that year and the Eta chapter of Beta Theta Pi in early 1852 (Johnson, 130). By 1860 there were ten to fifteen chapters of national fraternities on campus, but with the Civil War and the later closing of campus, the chapters disbanded or moved to other universities (Coates and Coates, 122). When the university reopened in 1875, the trustees recommended against granting permits to fraternities. Again, the societies met in secret, often off campus. Charters were reinstated for Phi Kappa Sigma in 1877, Alpha Tau Omega in 1879, and Kappa Alpha in 1881 (Johnson, 141-143). In 1885 the faculty recommended that the administration remove the ban on fraternities, and the trustees reluctantly gave in, on condition that societies "provide the Faculty with the names of their members and . . . pledge themselves not to use intoxicating liquors at any banquet given in Chapel Hill." (Coates and Coates, 122)

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Fraternities proliferated throughout the late 1800s, and there were more than a dozen in operation at the turn of the century (Johnson, 142). By this time, social activities on campus were divided primarily along the lines of fraternity membership, which in 1900 stood at 93 members (18%) and 419 nonmembers (82%). Fraternities controlled a number of campus organizations, including the General Athletic Association, which published the campus newspaper, the *Tar Heel*. The *Tar Heel's* editorial positions were staffed almost exclusively by fraternity members. Fraternities also sponsored the campus yearbook, the *Hellenian*, the predecessor to the slightly less Greek-centered *Yackety Yack*, which replaced it in 1901 (Wilson, 25).

Regardless of their campus prominence, fraternities still faced opposition by the administration. A 1910 report commented on the lower academic standing of fraternity members, whose Juniors' grade point average stood almost one point worse than the non-Greek Junior average, despite the fact that non-fraternity members on average took four more hours of classes a week (Wilson, 66-67).

The political power of fraternity members was apparent in the 1920s. By this time there was an established political "machine" on campus. This "machine" would hand pick individuals to run for specific offices and develop their own slate. This selection activity came to be known as the "frame-up" (Bledsoe, 4.) The role of fraternities was pivotal in the success and influence of this maneuver. As an established group, bringing in a fraternity brought in a block of votes as opposed to obtaining them one at a time. Often, a fraternity's support of the machine's slate could be secured by nominating one of their members to candidacy. Some of the most coveted seats were Student Government, President of the YMCA and Editor of the *Yackety Yak*. Other groups such as the Dialectic and Debate societies were also considered important enough to "frame-up."

Interestingly, during the first half of the 1920s the Beta controlled a number of the "high-power" positions on campus including president of the Senior Class, president of the Publications Union Board, and editor of the *Yackety Yak* (Bledsoe, 5.) It was the opinion of the other fraternities on campus that the Betas were monopolizing the offices. In order to appease the other fraternities, new offices were created by separating the student council president from class president – these had previously been the same office. While fraternities remained extremely influential after this action, the role of the Betas, individually, was lessened.

In 1928 fraternity domination of campus politics increased. Incoming freshman were allowed to pledge a fraternity within the first weeks of their arrival on campus. Prior to this, students were not allowed to pledge a fraternity until their sophomore year. This gave the fraternities even more leverage in the political system as there were fewer non-fraternal candidates. In the fall of 1928 the fraternity slate swept twenty-eight of the thirty elected positions. This made the frame-

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up, previously suspected but never openly confirmed, undeniable. There was a backlash to the campus political machine, but by all accounts, it continued to exist even after this event.

In the 1920s, membership in the thirty-one national fraternities increased to more than 900 members, approximately 25% of students (*Daily Tar Heel*, Sept. 28, 1929). As their membership and power grew, fraternities also developed a physical presence on campus. Fraternities had been assigned quarters in dormitories. In the mid-1890s, fraternities began to move out of the residence halls, initially renting houses and then building them.

The construction of these houses took considerable investment. Some chapters purchased their own lots, such as Beta Theta Pi, which spent \$25,000 for the George Pickard property. House construction also consumed considerable sums: Kappa Sigma, 1930, \$35,000; Pi Kappa Alpha, 1926, \$35,000; Zeta Psi, 1928, \$40,000; Phi Kappa Sigma, 1927, \$45,000; Chi Psi, 1930, \$50,000. By 1929 a *Daily Tar Heel* article claimed that the real value of fraternity property was around \$500,000 (*Daily Tar Heel*, Sept. 28, 1929). The building boom also had the advantage of easing the housing shortage on campus (Wilson, 411).

This period of fraternity growth and building corresponded to that seen on other North Carolina college campuses. For example, in the late 1920s Davidson College fraternities constructed houses in what is known as Jackson Court. In contrast to UNC, however, the properties continued to be owned, supervised, and controlled by the college (Beaty, 266).

While fraternity chapters continued to develop over the coming decades, membership remained at around 20% of the student population. Today fraternity and sorority members make up 17% of UNC undergraduates. (UNC Greek Affairs) The majority of the older fraternities continue to be located in their 1920s – 1930s chapter houses.

**Architectural Context: Fraternity Houses at University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill**

The Fraternity House is a specific property type combining in both form and purpose the elements of an institutional and residential building. A fraternity house is irrevocably tied to an institution; namely a college or university, and serves, in part, as a meeting place for a large organization. It also serves a residential purpose, just at a larger scale. This duality of purpose and/or use and the resulting scale, form, and style is what places the fraternity house in its own architectural context.

As stated in the historical context, early fraternities did not exist in houses, but were simply organizations associated with a college or university population and, occasionally, housed as a unit within existing campus dormitories. The first movement of fraternities into their own houses occurred at Chapel Hill in the early 1900s with the establishment of the Kappa Alpha House in

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1904. Many other fraternities followed suit, establishing Fraternity Row at the northwest corner of campus near the intersection of Franklin and Columbia Streets. These early houses were similar to private residences, but slightly larger in scale, with the ability to house approximately ten to twelve members. Two of these original houses, the Evergreen House and the Hill Annex, still stand in their original locations but have been used as university buildings since the late 1920s.

As a result of their growing membership and the university's desire to separate them from university buildings, fraternity houses moved off campus in the 1920s and took on an entirely new form. These more substantial structures not only reflected the growing size and prominence of fraternities on campus, but also reflected architectural movements in institutional and residential building occurring across the South. The majority of fraternity houses present on the UNC-CH campus today either date from this period of construction, 1920s – early 1930s, or are later interpretations of these forms.

In the era following the end of World War I the University launched a building plan that combined a Beaux Arts plan with a "renaissance of Southern Colonial at Chapel Hill" (Bishir, 396). University architect Arthur Nash, whose firm Atwood and Nash designed a majority of the buildings during this era, as well as a few fraternity houses, stated that it was at this time that "the University consciously adopted an 'official' style of architecture." (Bishir, 397). Nash's "official" style consisted of substantial, symmetrical "colonial" structures constructed of red brick and adorned with classical elements such as pediments and colossal porticos lined with columns. These structures were equally as impressive in scale as in restraint, the trademark of classical architecture.

The Colonial Revival movement was also prevalent in residential architecture across the state during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In residential architecture the Colonial Revival movement came in two phases; the first was a direct effect from designs shown during the era of American expositions. Beginning in the late 1800s this phase was more diverse in its combinations of elements and open to interpretations reflective of the designer and local tastes. The second, later phase, dating from the 1920s into the 1930s, was a more restrained and literal form that reflected Georgian and Federal themes derived from the model of Colonial Williamsburg (Bishir 417). One of the most popular forms of residential Colonial Revival in North Carolina was the "Southern Colonial." The principal features of this style were symmetry, a central passage, and a double pile plan with a portico of colossal order, sometimes with one-story porches extending out to the sides (Bishir, 420).

Fraternity houses built during the mid-to-late 1920s on the campus of UNC-CH, and at universities across the South as well, reflect the elements of the "colonial" buildings Nash described. The first house to be completed was Delta Kappa Epsilon in 1923. Houses for

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Sigma Alpha Epsilon and Sigma Chi soon followed. By 1926 the Columbia Street fraternity court had five houses. Beta Theta Pi had purchased the lot to the court's north. In 1927, Zeta Psi, Kappa Alpha, and Kappa Sigma jointly purchased the Patterson property on Cameron Avenue to develop a new fraternity court.

The new chapter houses were considerably more monumental than the old dwellings on fraternity row. Rather than accommodating ten or twelve members, they could house up to forty members and featured elaborate halls and refectories, imposing piazzas, and romantic revival facades. The 1923 Colonial Inn, designed by University architects Atwood and Nash, is a Southern Colonial Revival style building with French doors across the front opening to the monumental portico. At the side is a porte cochere. This hotel was the model for many fraternity houses. Atwood and Nash designed the Pi Kappa Alpha and Zeta Psi houses. Kenneth Ellington, who designed Kappa Alpha and Kappa Sigma, which flank Zeta Psi on the Cameron Avenue fraternity court, consulted with Nash to ensure that the houses on the court complemented one another. The Beta Theta Pi House follows the Carolina Inn model closely. Other large fraternity houses drew on different revival styles. The Chi Psi house on Cameron Avenue (Atwood and Nash, 1929) was designed in the Norman style, and East Franklin Street's Alpha Tau Omega (Courtland Curtis, 1930) was rendered in Tudor Gothic.

What sets the Beta Theta Pi House apart from the other houses constructed during this era is a result of both the circumstances under which the house was built and decisions that have been made in renovating the building in the recent past. The majority of fraternity houses constructed during the 1920s were constructed on Fraternity Courts established by the University as small cul-de-sacs with lots on which fraternities constructed their houses. The Beta Theta Pi House was not constructed on a court, but on a parcel purchased by the fraternity from a private individual. This significantly larger parcel allowed the Betas to construct a house more substantial in scale than those being constructed on the courts. Furthermore, the Beta's larger lot fronted a main street allowing them a deep front lawn and a more prominent location. The result of these factors is a more impressive house that sets itself apart from most other fraternity houses of the period.

Since their construction in the 1920s, fraternity houses have undergone a number of changes. The Beta House, while altered, has remained the most true to its original form and architectural integrity. The exterior is largely unaltered. The only substantial alterations are raising the south wing to the same height as the north wing, and the enclosure of the north porch, done in such a manner that its original form is easily discernable. While the interior has been updated, the original floor plan is intact. The main floor with living rooms and meeting rooms is largely unaltered. The chapter room still houses its original mantel and bookcase. Most other fraternity houses of the period have either been heavily altered with such changes as vinyl window replacements and doors, or have been so neglected that they have fallen into disrepair.

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Boundary Description: The boundary that encompasses the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House property includes 0.99 acres identified in the Orange County Real Estate records as Pin # 9788.36-3774\7.86.C.6 . The address on record is listed as 114 S. Columbia Street.

Boundary Justification: The boundary represents the entire parcel associated with the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House since its construction.

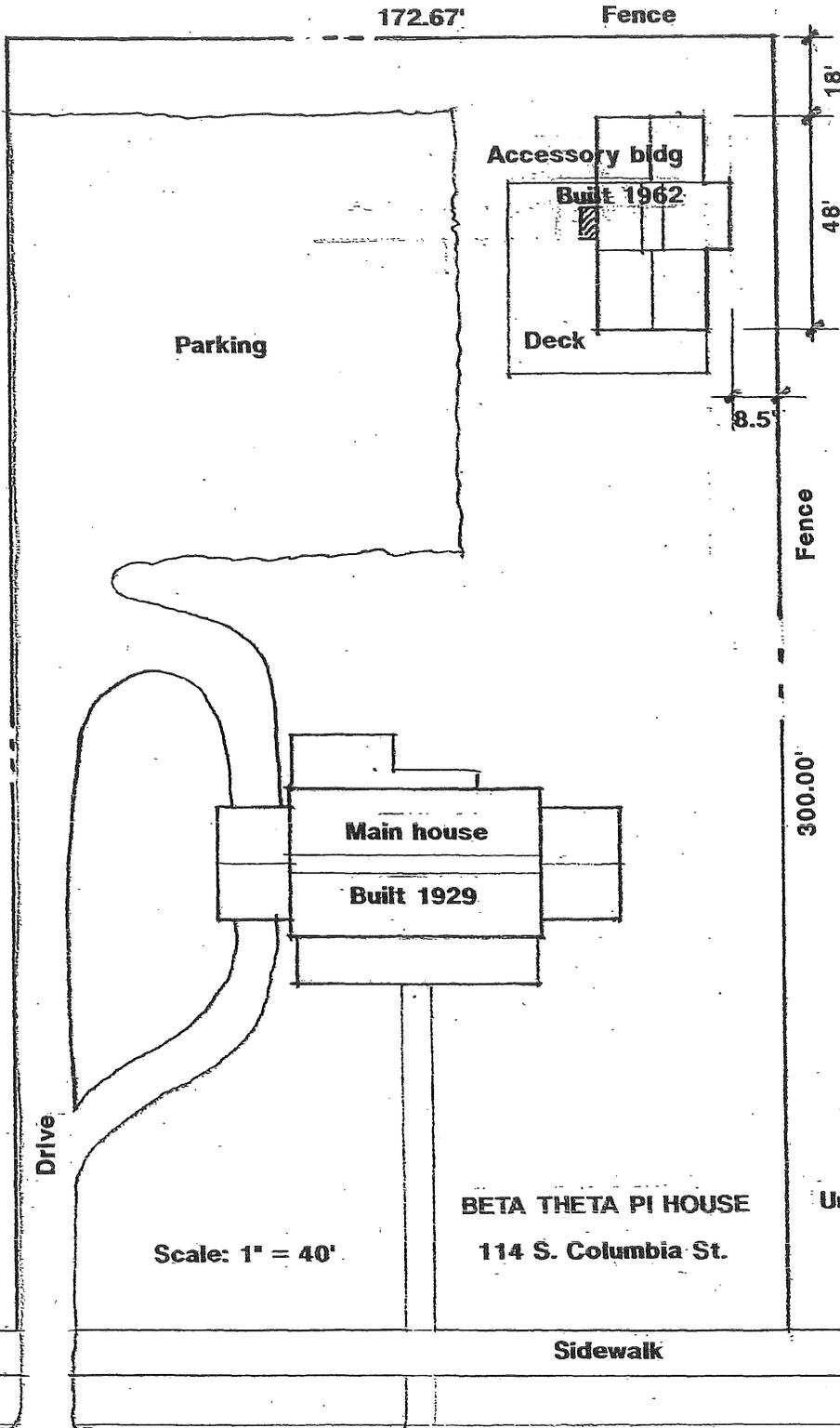
BETA THETA PI FRATERNITY HOUSE  
CHAPEL HILL, ORANGE COUNTY, NC

University Square

SITE PLAN



NOTE: All features shown are existing except  
for proposed vestibule on accessory bldg.



Scale: 1" = 40'

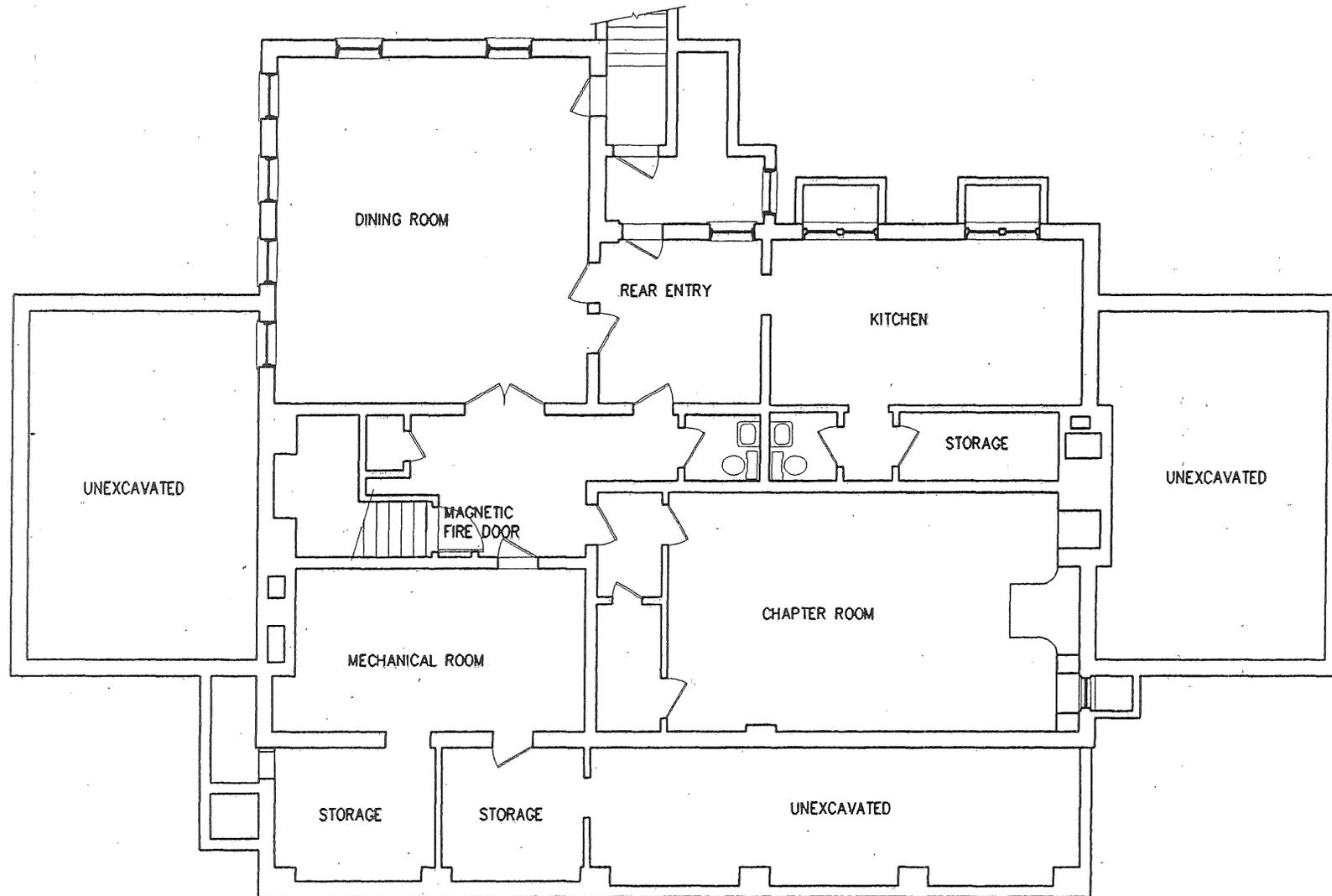
BETA THETA PI HOUSE  
114 S. Columbia St.

Fraternity Court

University Baptist Church

Sidewalk

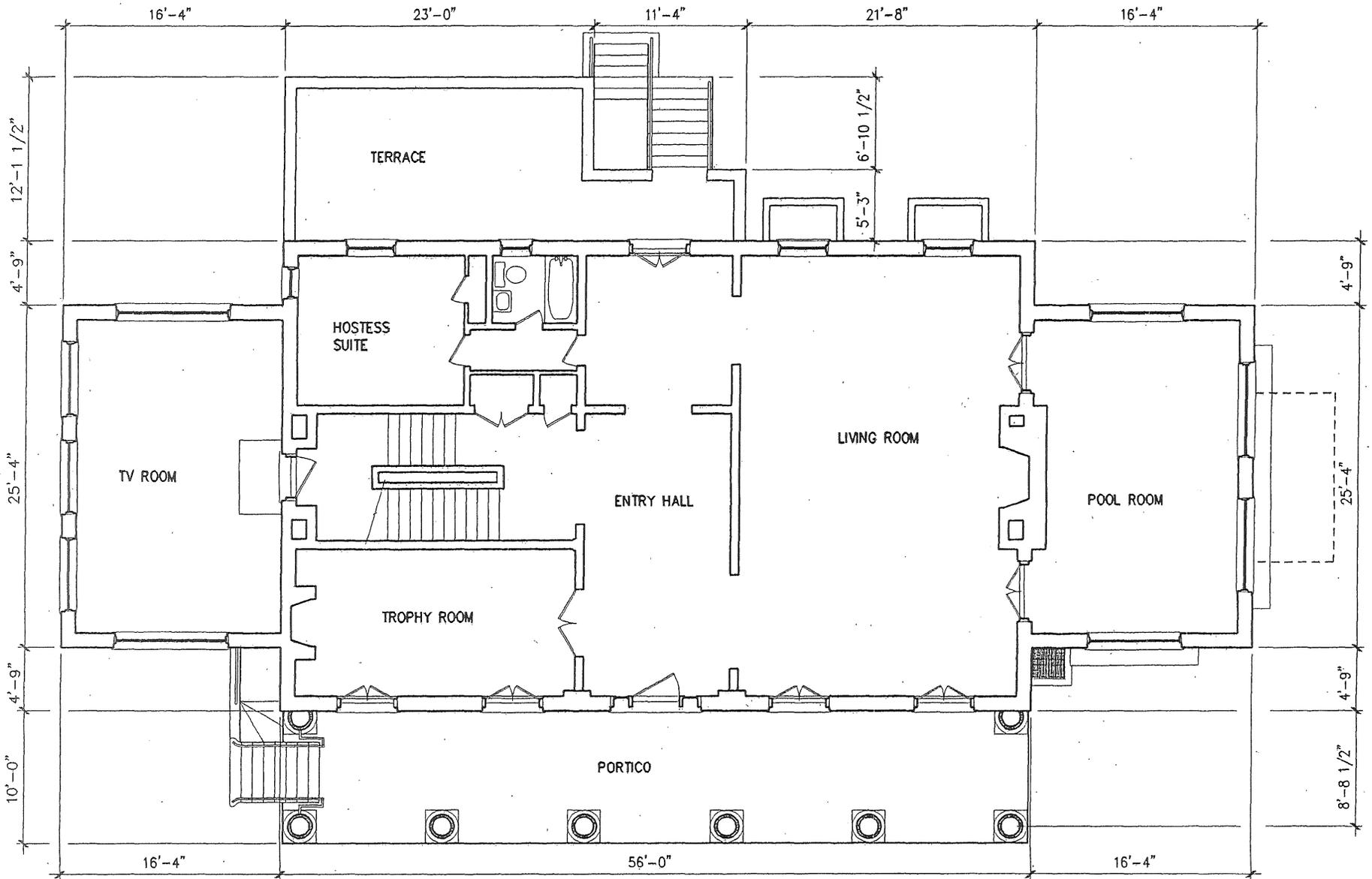
Drive



BETA THETA PI FRATERNITY HOUSE  
CHAPEL HILL, ORANGE COUNTY, NC

**BASEMENT PLAN**  
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



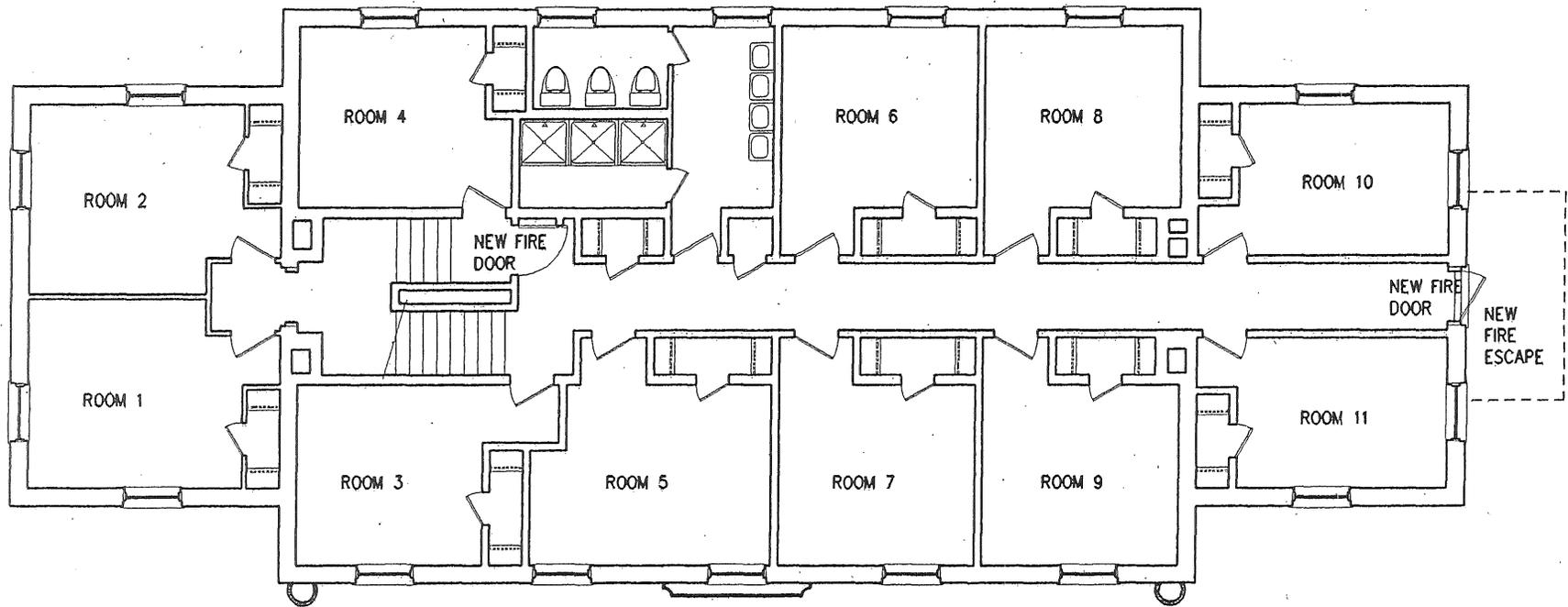


**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

SCALE:  $\frac{3}{32}'' = 1'-0''$

BETA THETA PI FRATERNITY HOUSE  
 CHAPEL HILL, ORANGE COUNTY, NC

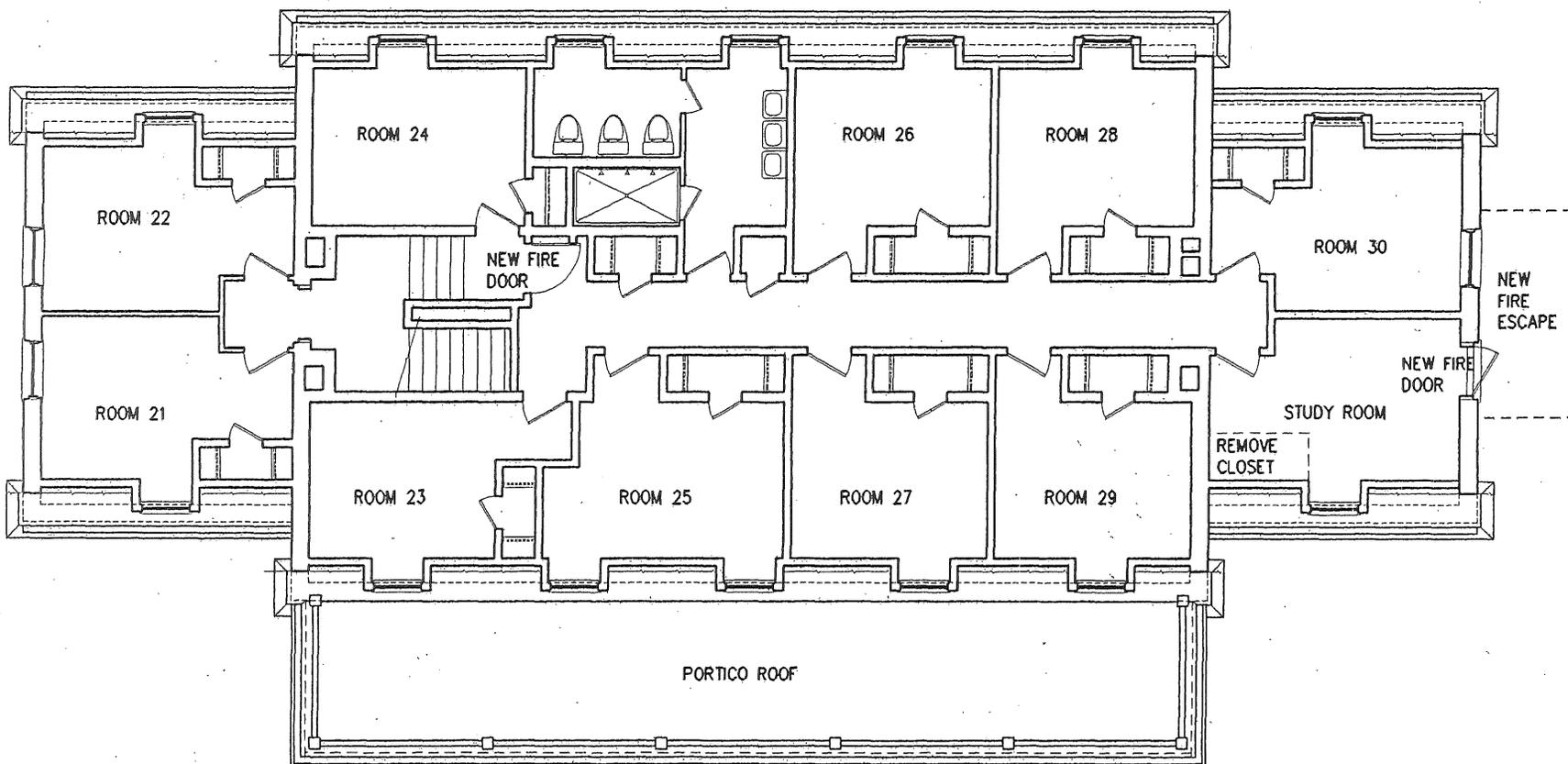




BETA THETA PI FRATERNITY HOUSE  
CHAPEL HILL, ORANGE COUNTY, NC

**SECOND FLOOR PLAN**  
SCALE:  $3/32" = 1'-0"$



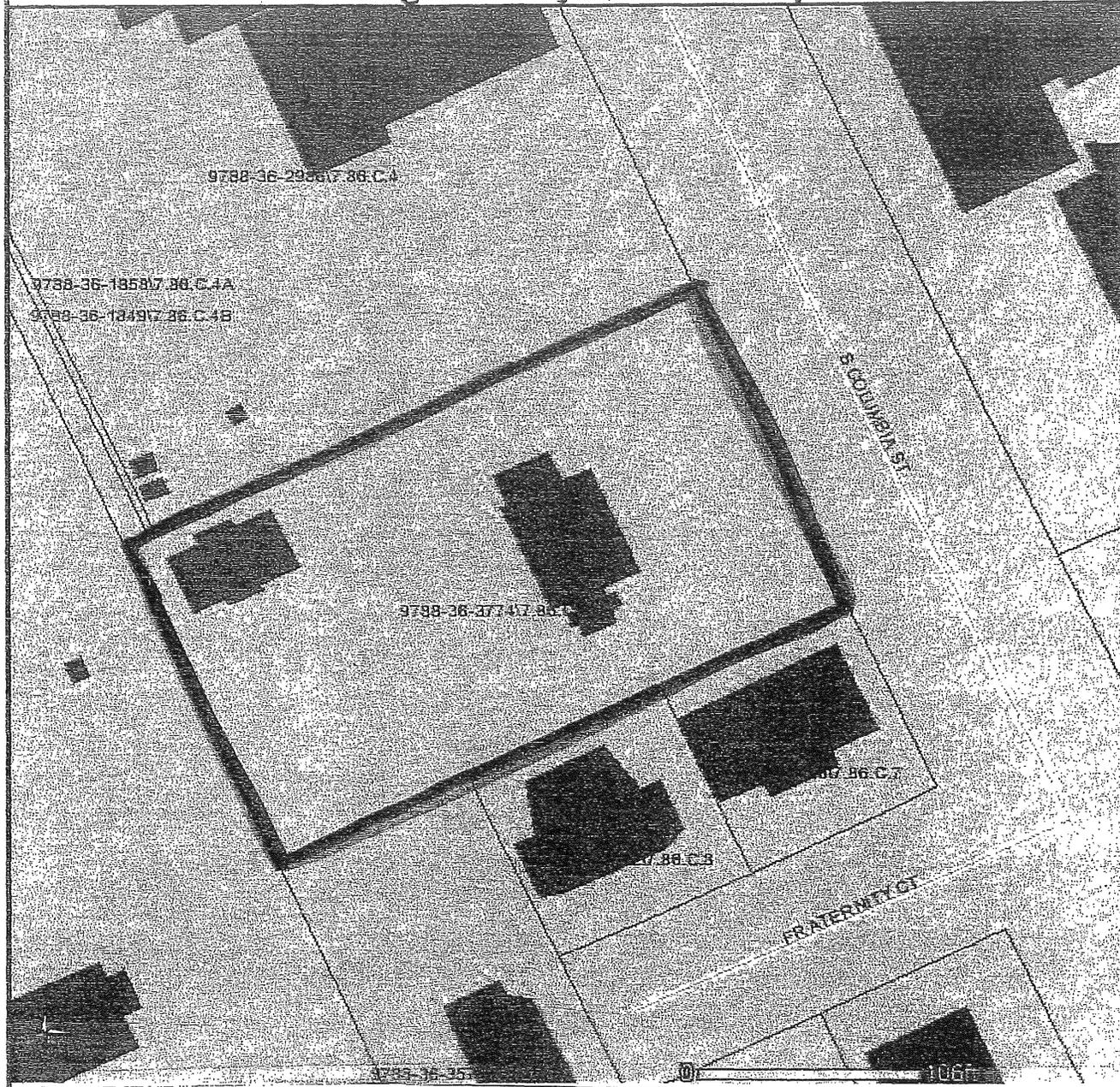


**THIRD FLOOR PLAN**  
 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

BETA THETA PI FRATERNITY HOUSE  
 CHAPEL HILL, ORANGE COUNTY, NC



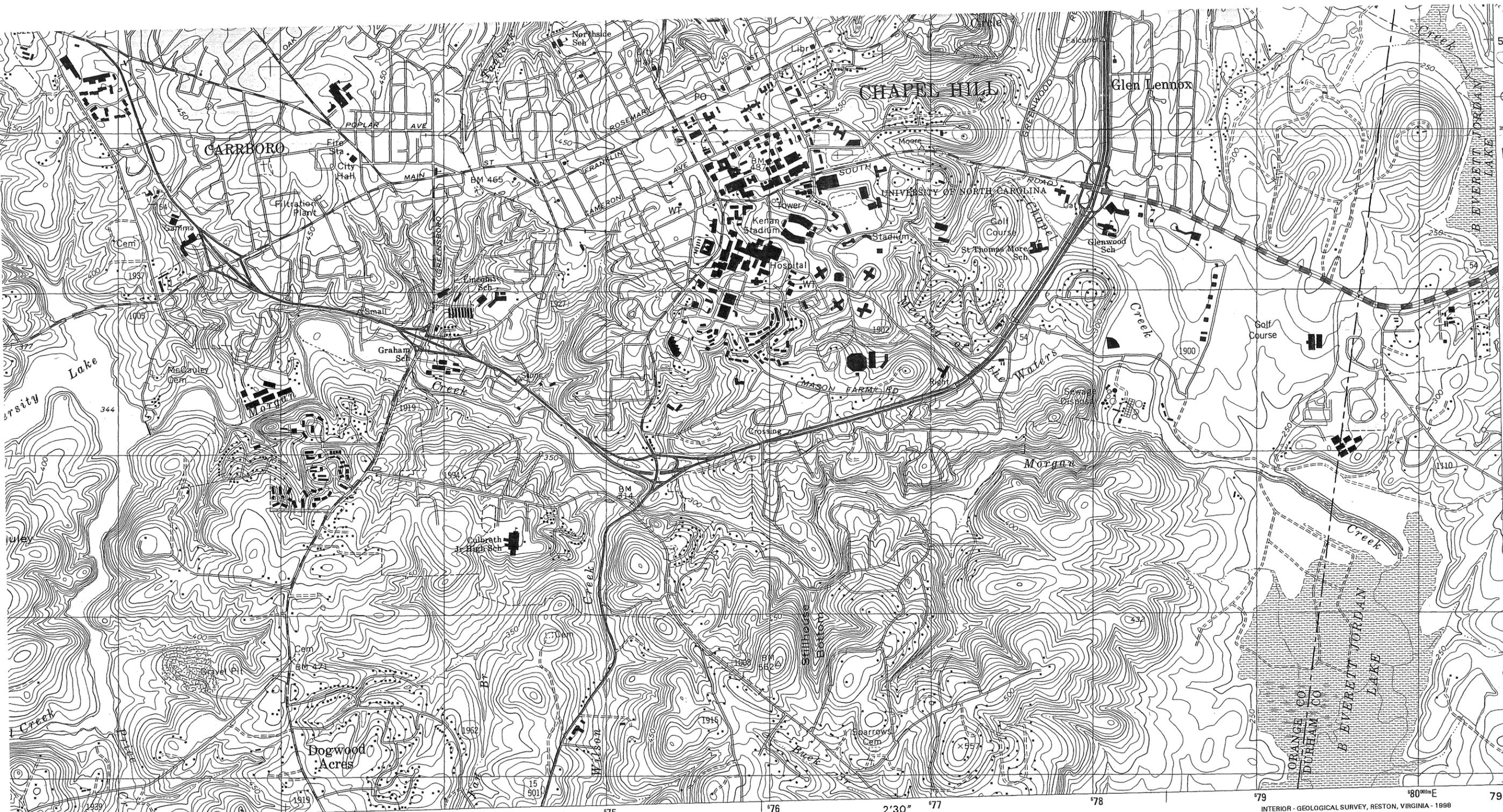
# Orange County N.C. GIS Map



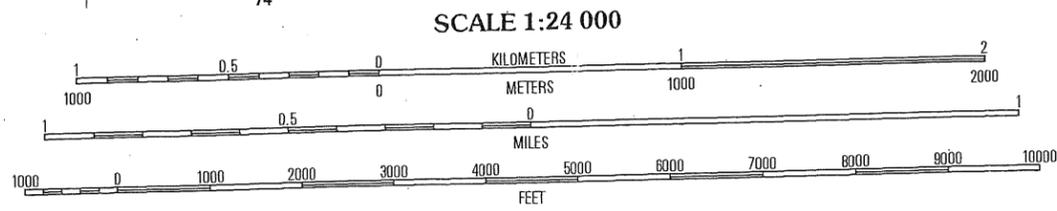
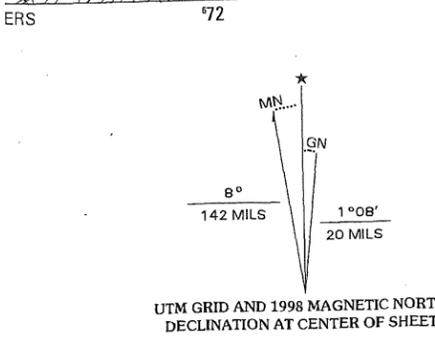
BETA THETA PI FRATERNITY HOUSE  
CHAPEL HILL, ORANGE COUNTY, NC

Tax Parcel Map  
with building footprint





Beta Theta Pi House  
 Orange Court  
 North Carolina  
 Chapel Hill  
 76 675450  
 N 30-59Z  
 None 17



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
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4	5		4 White Cross
			5 Southwest Durham
			6 Bynum
6	7	8	7 Farrington
			8 Green Level

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Primary highway hard surface ..... Light-duty road, hard or improved surface .....

Secondary highway hard surface ..... Unimproved road .....

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