

**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 determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 an 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 Engineers Club of Dayton

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 110 East Monument Avenue [N/A] not for publication

city or town Dayton [N/A] vicinity

state Ohio code OH county Montgomery code 113 zip code 45402

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ State Historic Preservation Officer _____ Date _____

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 certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- other, explain
 See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

Engineers Club of Dayton
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Ohio
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

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

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Clubhouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival - Georgian Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Poured Concrete
walls	Brick
roof	Asphalt Composition
other	

Narrative Description

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

Engineers Club of Dayton
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Ohio
County/State

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 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)

Engineering

Entertainment/Recreation

Periods of Significance

1918-1929

Significant Dates

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

Charles F. Kettering

Edward A. Deeds

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Harry I. Schenck and Harry J. Williams, archs.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Engineers Club of Dayton

Engineers Club of Dayton
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Ohio
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

- | | | | | |
|----|------|---------|----------|----------------------------|
| 1. | 16 | 740638 | 4405095 | (NAD27) |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
| 2. | | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
| 3. | | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
| 4. | | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | [] 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 Edward Roach (with the assistance of Nancy Horlacher)
organization NPS/Dayton Aviation Htg. National Historical Park date 7 May 2007
street & number P.O. Box 9280 telephone 937 225 7705
city or town Dayton state Ohio zip code 45409

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Engineers Club of Dayton
street & number 110 East Monument Avenue telephone 937 228 2148
city or town Dayton state Ohio zip code 45402

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Engineers Club of Dayton
Montgomery County, OhioSection number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

Designed by locally prominent architects Harry I. Schenck and Harry J. Williams, both Engineers Club members, the Engineers Club of Dayton is a Georgian-style building (see photographs 1-6 and architectural plans A-D) situated in downtown Dayton along the south bank of the Great Miami River near its confluence with the Mad River.¹ Schenck and Williams designed the structure to facilitate scientific discussion and experimentation and encourage social interaction, providing the facility an auditorium and a scientific and technical library as well as a dining room, billiards room (now converted to a meeting space) and a ladies' lounge (now a small private meeting and dining room). Initial plans for the building also proposed the construction of a small testing laboratory southeast of the main clubhouse; there is no evidence supporting the actual construction of this laboratory. Charles Kettering and Edward Deeds acquired the land for the clubhouse from private parties in 1916, and financed construction of the building between 1917 and 1918. In 2006, the Engineers Club retained high architectural integrity, having undergone minimal changes to its structural or cosmetic fabric since its opening.

The scientific and social spaces in the Engineers Club are arranged in an inverted T-shaped plan, with the auditorium (second floor, photographs 15 and 16) and dining room (first floor, photograph 10) making up the vertical stem of the T extending to the south, and the balance of the rooms and lobby forming the horizontal stroke of the T facing north and fronting on Monument Avenue, where the building's formal entrance is located. The exterior of the building has a simple seventeenth-eighteenth century English Georgian style reflected by the use of Bedford limestone for a water table, and decorated cornice band and column work at the entrances. The field of the exterior walls is filled with gray-buff brick. The structure is masonry bearing walls with concrete-filled clay tile floors and a heavy timber-truss roof system.

The interior of the building is of Tudor style, clad in plaster and oak paneling and detailing of significantly more complex design than that of the exterior. The T-shaped arrangement of spaces offers an economy of space by minimizing the loss of useful function to simple circulation space, and by maximizing the opportunity for interaction between club members. The marble-floored lobby at the intersection of the T contains a large open oak Elizabethan stair connecting the first and second floors, and serves as a hub to all spaces on these floors (photographs 7, 8). Of note on the intermediate landing of these stairs is a grandfather clock designed into the building and engineered to synchronize clocks in each of the major spaces of the building by the use of pneumatic tubes through which puffs of air make the clocks tick in unison (photograph 8). A coatroom, receptionist's office, telephone booths, restrooms and a retrofitted elevator complete the arrangement of the lobby. While the Engineers Club changed many of its interior furnishings in the decades since the period of significance, the interior structure, layout, and architectural decoration and trimming is unchanged.

The dining room originally offered a main dining area flanked by eight smaller private dining spaces on the east and west sides (plan A; photograph 10). French doors in these private spaces opened to landscaped lawn and garden areas. These smaller spaces could be isolated from each other and from the main dining area by folding wood and glass doors. The ceilings are laced with

¹ See also Pleasant Hill United Church of Christ, Miami County, Ohio, NRHP 2002; Dayton Young Men's Christian Association Building, Montgomery County, Ohio, NRHP 1998; Dayton Power and Light Building Group, Montgomery County, Ohio, NRHP 2006; Charles F. Kettering House, Montgomery County, Ohio, NHL, 1977; Mutual Home & Savings Association Building, Montgomery County, Ohio, NRHP 1982, for other listed examples of the work of Schenck and Williams.

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molded plaster patterns tracing shapes in molded acoustic plaster. The original marble floor has been covered with carpet for the sake of acoustics and atmosphere, and to conceal the need to borrow matching marble for repairs in other areas of the building, but it remains intact.

The largest single room in the building is the auditorium, built with seating for 450 people. The Engineers Club continues to use the plainly-decorated auditorium for presentations and occasional performances. Deeds, Kettering, and other founding club members believed in the importance of educating children about engineering, and the floor of the auditorium's stage offers laboratory-type utility services for science experiments, including water, natural gas, compressed air and electricity. Above and behind the auditorium seating area on the third floor are rooms built to provide emergency guest accommodations and a bathroom and a locker room for such guests. The Engineers Club now uses these rooms for storage and rarely accesses them (photographs 17, 18).

The first floor east wing initially housed a ladies' lounge for the wives and daughters of the heavily-male membership. It is decorated with molded plaster shapes and patterns in the style of the eighteenth-century Adam brothers of Scotland. With many women now full club members, the Engineers Club renovated the former lounge into a small private dining and meeting space known as the Wedgwood room (photograph 9). Access to this room is through a gallery along the south side of the east wing. This corridor recalls the fashion of large English Tudor-style houses, and originally led to a wrought-iron-and-glass porte-cochere covered entrance on the east elevation of the building. Later needs for a wider building driveway and parking areas caused the Engineers Club to remove the porte-cochere and sunken garden east of the dining room after the period of significance.

The first floor west wing, originally a billiard and game room, is now known as the Wright room (photograph 11). Commemorating the accomplishments of the Wright brothers with photographs and descriptions of significant events in their careers, this room is used by the Engineers Club for large meetings.

In the upper east wing is the library suite, with five rooms. The largest room was initially a reading room, furnished with leather seating, and with wooden bookshelves and a fireplace which still remain (photograph 19). This room is now equipped with a large conference table. One of the original four smaller library rooms adjoining the reading room is still used for private meetings or for individual study. Club offices occupy the three remaining rooms, but all of the rooms retain their original structure, design, and trim (photograph 19).

The upper west wing, originally known as the lounge, is now known as the English room and offers meeting space amongst wildlife trophies and portraits of each of the Club presidents since the Club's inception (photographs 12, 13). As with the Wright room, the Engineers Club now uses this space for large meetings.

Between the library and the English room, as a northward extension of the upper Lobby, is the loggia. Originally an outdoor porch with a view of the confluence of the Great Miami and Mad rivers, this space was enclosed with glass after the period of significance and now is a reading room overlooking the public RiverScape Park along the south bank of the Miami River (photograph 14). It retains integrity of space and function, with only the addition of the glass windows in what were initially open porch windows modifying its design.

The Engineers Club initially obtained heat through a city steam system; this system piped steam into the building's attic and circulated the steam immediately beneath the gutters in order to keep them

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from freezing during the winter months. Also at the attic level between two guest rooms was a fireproof projection room serving the Auditorium. Ventilated directly to the outside, this room was designed and constructed to protect the balance of the building from the carbon-arc film projectors commonly used during the early twentieth century.

Retaining high structural integrity and high integrity of its original exterior and interior architectural design, the Engineers Club remains a significant and recognizable structure commemorating the continuing importance of professional engineering in Dayton.

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Montgomery County, OhioSection number 8 Page 4**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Engineers Club of Dayton is historically significant under NRHP criterion A for its reflection of the importance of professional engineering in the Dayton region during the early twentieth century and criterion B for its close association with Edward A. Deeds (1874-1960; Deeds' Barn, NRHP 1979; Deeds Carillon, NRHP 2005) and Charles F. Kettering (1876-1958; Charles F. Kettering House, NHL, 1977; General Motors Research Laboratory, Detroit, Michigan, NRHP 2005), two nationally-significant engineers, inventors, and business progressives who lived and worked for much of their lives in Dayton. Deeds, best-known for his various positions at National Cash Register (NCR), from chief of development and construction to president and chairman of the board, and Kettering, who gained fame for introducing the self-starting automobile and leaded gasoline, were two of the wealthiest and most prominent members of Dayton's engineering community during the early twentieth century. Though the building continues to operate as the home of the Engineers Club, its principal era of historic significance is the period between its construction in 1918 and 1929, when Deeds and Kettering transferred ownership of the property to the club's board of governors.

The Engineers Club developed in an era during which Dayton was a hive of engineering and technological development. During the early twentieth century, the city of Dayton, Ohio, was a laboratory for business progressivism and new technology, with its residents holding more patents per capita than those of any other city in the United States. From the system of levees and dry dams built along the Great Miami River and its tributaries to minimize the possibility of a flood as devastating as that of 1913, to the growth of NCR and the Dayton Engineering Laboratories Company (more commonly known as Delco) to the production of airplanes through Wilbur and Orville Wrights' Wright Company and the subsequent (but unrelated) Dayton-Wright Airplane Company, to the U.S. Army Air Service's establishment of McCook Field (a predecessor of the modern Wright-Patterson Air Force Base) in Dayton in 1917 as its principal experimental facility for the development of military aviation, engineers and technicians were prominent members of the local professional community.

Deeds and Kettering – then prominent through their connections with NCR and its founder John H. Patterson - realized that many engineers lived and worked in the Dayton area, but believed that few opportunities existed for these engineers to meet professionally and socially. Wanting greater opportunity for intellectual exchange and professional networking among Dayton-area engineers, on 20 February 1914 Deeds, who that year resigned from his position as NCR vice-president for engineering and production to become vice-president of Delco, and Kettering, president of Delco, arranged a meeting at which they and thirteen other prominent members of the local engineering community met at the Dayton Club and discussed creating an organization for the “dissemination and discussion of engineering problems, coupled with the fostering of good fellowship, and the inspiration and encouragement to the younger men.”² Using information of other similar organizations gathered by local teacher and engineer (and early Engineers Club member) F.O. Clements, that group decided to form the Engineers Club of Dayton in May of 1914 as a society incorporated for the “professional improvement of its members, the encouragement of social intercourse among them, and the advancement of engineering.”³ Deeds and Kettering, relatively wealthy civic leaders, were two of the most prominent proponents of business progressivism in the Dayton area, “members of the last whole generation of business leaders who could be called both charismatic men and corporate men;” it was through their financial support that this group of fifteen could make their idea of a club for engineers a

² “The Engineers' Club of Dayton: General Information and By-Laws” (Dayton, Ohio: 1914), 8, 7(quote).

³ Paul, Charles A., *Brief History of the Engineers' Club of Dayton* (Dayton: National Cash Register, 1942), 3; “The Engineers' Club of Dayton: General Information and By-Laws,” 18.

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Montgomery County, OhioSection number 8 Page 5reality.⁴

In addition to locally demonstrating their philanthropic ideals by being the principal backers of the creation of the Engineers Club, Deeds and Kettering helped establish other community institutions. Their community philanthropy was partly an extension of that of NCR progenitor John H. Patterson (1844-1922), for whom Deeds and Kettering both worked at NCR and of whose "welfare work" historian Judith Sealander described as "the first major program of corporate employee benefits in the country."⁵ With his wife, Edith, Deeds paid for the construction of the Deeds Carillon (National Register, 2005) in 1942 and established Dayton's Carillon Park, an outdoor museum of history and technology in 1950; he also funded the restoration and exhibition of Orville and Wilbur Wright's 1905 airplane. Kettering, who helped establish the Sloan-Kettering Institute for cancer research in New York in 1945, provided a greenhouse at his Moraine estate for the use of Arthur Morgan's 1917-1927 Moraine Park School, described by Sealander as "the most elaborate attempt to create a Dewey-style progressive laboratory school in Ohio;" the greenhouse is not extant.⁶ Aside from these community assets and the Engineers Club, the Dayton area contains relatively few publicly-accessible intact resources connected with Deeds' and Kettering's public lives in the greater community. Kettering's Ridgeleigh Terrace estate, while still technically listed as a National Historic Landmark (1966), lost its historic integrity through an unsympathetic reconstruction after a destructive 1994 fire. The barn of Deeds' Dayton estate, though listed on the National Register (Deeds' Barn, 1979), it is now part of the Kettering-Moraine Museum and retains no integrity of location, having been moved to the museum from its original Dayton location. Deeds' Moraine Farm is owned by NCR and used as a conference facility and, while visible from adjacent roads, is not open to the public and is not managed as a historic property or listed on the National Register.

The Engineers Club tried to appeal to as many of Dayton's engineers as possible to become members. It maintained several levels of membership for the men who joined it; women represented 0.3% of all engineers in the United States in 1947, and their professional prevalence in 1914 was likely lower.⁷ In 1914, the club allowed only "engineers practicing their profession" to become active members; "technical men of satisfactory attainment" who wanted "to increase their engineering knowledge" could join as associate members. Those under the age of 27 could join as junior members.⁸ The club also reserved the right to designate honorary members. All club members gained access to the clubhouse – a converted residence - at the northwest corner of Second and Madison Streets in Dayton on Delco property, provided through the direction of Deeds and Kettering.⁹ This building contained lounges, a dining room and kitchen on its first floor; an assembly room with library alcove, and two private studies on the second floor; and three bedrooms and a bathroom for visiting

⁴ Sealander, Judith, *Grand Plans: Business Progressivism and Social Change in Ohio's Miami Valley, 1890-1929* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 180.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁷ Cowan, Ruth Schwartz and Joan Lee, "Women in Engineering: History Matters," *Penn Engineering* (Spring 2004), 24. The 1916 establishment of the Dayton Woman's Club (National Register, 1975) provided local upper-class women with their own formal social club; the first woman to become a full member of the Engineers Club in her own right, Maude E. Gardner, joined in 1936. See Diane Heckert, "Keeping in Step with Science," *Dayton Daily News* (29 September 1963), America section, 6-7 and the *Board of Governors' Minutes*, 7 March 1936. Chemical engineer and lawyer Gertrude Bucher joined as a junior member in 1929; see the *Board of Governors' Minutes*, 5 November 1929.

⁸ "The Engineers' Club of Dayton: General Information and By-Laws," 10, 19.

⁹ Paul, 2-3.

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members on its third floor.¹⁰

During its first four years, the Engineers Club grew rapidly, with 271 men noted by name and company or profession in the program of events for the dedication of the new clubhouse in 1918. Those members came from large corporations with national scope – 34 members came from Delco, including Deeds and Kettering – and smaller concerns, such as the Carroll Engineering Company, represented only by William M. Carroll. The vast majority lived in and immediately around Dayton, though men from as far away as Albany, New York, and Wilmington, Delaware were also members, paying a lower out-of-town rate established in late 1914; engineers throughout the United States wanted to connect with the engineering profession in Dayton.¹¹ By 1916, club officers and members found the 335 Second Street clubhouse “inadequate to meet the successful development of the social and educational advantages so much enjoyed by the rapidly increasing membership.”¹² Additionally, Delco wanted to expand its operations onto the property it loaned the Engineers Club, and the club decided to search for a new home.¹³

Though its membership grew greatly during its first few years, reaching 412 by 1919, the Engineers Club could not afford to acquire property for a new clubhouse or fund construction of a building.¹⁴ Therefore, in 1916 Deeds and Kettering donated \$300,000 to purchase property bordering the Great Miami River at Monument and Jefferson streets and construct a new Georgian Revival edifice a few blocks northwest of the first clubhouse.¹⁵ A building committee, chaired by Harry B. Canby, travelled to engineering clubs in Chicago, Detroit, and New York, examining their facilities and gathering ideas for the new Dayton building, and ultimately supervised the awarding of a construction contract in April of 1917. Upon its opening on 2 February 1918, the *Dayton Journal* described the new clubhouse as “splendidly adapted to the purpose which it is intended to serve.”¹⁶ The competing *Dayton Daily News* stated that the evening ceremonies to inaugurate the facility, presided over by Deeds in his role as club president, would “stand as a milestone in the onward march of progressive Dayton.”¹⁷ The club’s membership also dedicated a plaque (displayed in 2007 in the Lobby beside the building’s front desk) commemorating the crucial roles of Deeds and Kettering in the club’s development and recognizing their “deep interest in scientific research and their abiding devotion to the cause of truth.” After taking over the former Second Street clubhouse, Delco used it for its ignition school and for company offices for a few years before razing it and expanding the company’s plant no. 8 on the site.

Within its new, larger building the Engineers Club maintained an insular place in the greater Dayton community during the 1920s, turning its attentions to the professional development and networking of its members; the minutes of its board of governors show club officers concerned with membership development, the club restaurant, and the variety of technical and non-technical programming available to club members. Between 1914 and 1917, the club published academic papers presented at its events in the *Proceedings of the Engineers Club of Dayton*, but the journal’s publication ceased as the club’s presenters “found it so difficult, especially during war days, to edit their papers for

¹⁰ “The Engineers’ Club of Dayton: General Information and By-Laws,” 12-14.

¹¹ “The Engineers’ Club of Dayton: Opening of the New Building February 2, 1918” (Dayton, Ohio: 1918), 13-16; Paul, 7.

¹² “The Engineers’ Club of Dayton: Opening of the New Building February 2, 1918,” 8.

¹³ Paul, 8.

¹⁴ Paul, 15.

¹⁵ Leslie, Stuart W., *Boss Kettering: Wizard of General Motors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 65.

¹⁶ “Engineers Open New Club Home; Notables There,” *Dayton Journal* (3 February 1918).

¹⁷ “New Engineers’ Club Dedicated to Members’ Use,” *Dayton Daily News* (3 February 1918).

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final publication,” and thereafter the club advertised its events in a newsletter under the titles “The Engineer” and “The Engineers Club News.”¹⁸ For members and their guests, the club offered a variety of programs related to aspects of engineering and to non-scientific topics, offering special programs to members’ families through the club’s Home Night Committee and later through its Ladies’ Committee. Events included children’s parties, movies, plays, and general lectures (such as Paul Biefield’s program on the “Marvels of the Universe”).¹⁹ For those interested in expanding their engineering or technical knowledge, the new building hosted such events as presentations by C.A. Woodbury on “Dynamite: Its Production and Applications” or by R.V. Parson on “Architectural Acoustics.”²⁰

The club’s varied programming involved speakers of national renown at events occasionally open to the general public. Luminaries such as paleontologist Roy Chapman Andrews – shortly after his 1923 discovery of dinosaur eggs in Mongolia – and naturalist and taxidermist Carl Akeley presented lectures in the club’s auditorium, while Charles Kettering’s occasional talks, such as his December 1927 “A Scientific Review of the Past Year” always drew large crowds.²¹ Electrical and natural gas connections on the stage of the clubhouse auditorium facilitated Kettering’s experiments. Deeds also spoke before the club on occasion, both independently (in 1927 he spoke on “The Cuban Sugar Industry;” in 1935 on “progress in southern countries”) and with Kettering (in 1934 they addressed the club on “new wonders of science” in their first dual appearance before the club for several years).²² Club programming became a popular attraction not only for the largely male membership but also for their spouses; in 1931 the Program Committee recommended that there be at least one meeting a year “that only members (men) attend. That keeps up the interest among men.” In addition to wanting to limit attendance at some programs to men, the Program Committee also thought that “It is good psychology to have occasional meetings exclusively for members and exclude outsiders.”²³ Nevertheless, the club maintained no formal ban in its rules against female members; instead, the strict professional qualifications required by the club (and a heavily-male engineering profession) maintained male dominance among the membership. From the opening of the 1918 clubhouse, the club set aside a lounge for women (principally relatives and guests of male members) on its first floor; a women’s committee, often chaired by the wife of the Engineers Club president and provided a small budget by the club, organized periodic lunches, bridge games, and other activities for members’ wives, and, as noted above, wives often attended the general-interest evening programs with their husbands.

Deeds and Kettering served as club symbols long after purchasing the Monument and Jefferson property and funding the construction of the second clubhouse and the early operations of the club, even after they parted professionally at Delco, with Kettering becoming a General Motors vice-president after GM’s 1918 acquisition of United Motors (into which Delco merged in 1916) and moving with his General Motors Research Corporation to Detroit in July of 1924. It was that year that the Engineers Club reached financial self-sufficiency, relieving Deeds and Kettering of their practice of the past decade of bankrolling the club; in 1929, shortly before the beginning of the Great Depression, Deeds and Kettering transferred title of clubhouse and property to the club’s board of governors. Thereafter, Deeds and Kettering maintained less-prominent roles in the operations of the club, with Kettering – who

¹⁸ Paul, 9.

¹⁹ *Minutes of the Board of Governors of the Engineers Club of Dayton* (hereafter cited as *Board of Governors’ Minutes*), 28 May 1924.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3 June 1924.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4 June 1928.

²² *Board of Governors’ Minutes*, 4 June 1928; *Dayton Journal*, 10 October 1935, 16:3; *ibid.*, 13 October 1934, 1:5; *Board of Governors’ Minutes*, 10 June 1935.

²³ *Board of Governors’ Minutes*, 4 June 1931.

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regarded Dayton, not Detroit, as home – still periodically presenting his popular programs to club members. The club's 1943 constitution made Deeds and Kettering honorary presidents and gave each the right to appoint one voting representative to the club's board of governors, though club minutes do not provide evidence that either man took advantage of this opportunity.²⁴

Aside from its prominent building, the Engineers Club maintained a low profile in the greater Dayton area during its first several decades, establishing few partnerships with other community groups, though it did open its doors to meetings and conventions of several professional groups and societies, reflecting Dayton's status as a city with significant professional resources for engineers. The club hosted a joint meeting with the Cleveland Engineering society in June of 1921 and serving as the headquarters for the American Society of Civil Engineers during that society's 1922 convention in Dayton; it also established reciprocal membership agreements with dozens of other engineering and technological professional clubs and societies around the United States.²⁵ Some club members pushed it to assert itself more significantly in local civic affairs. At the club's annual meeting in June of 1922, F.O. Clements asked the club to involve itself in more public activities and projects and public welfare. While Clements' proposal drew "earnest discussion as to the range of subjects" applicable from the gathered members, the club did not take decisive action.²⁶ Occasionally, though, the club's board of governors issued proclamations concerning civic issues of concern to its membership, which included many of the area's significant business progressives – including Arthur Morgan of the Miami Conservancy District (and Antioch College in nearby Yellow Springs) in addition to Deeds and Kettering. Other early members of significant renown locally or nationally included aviator Orville Wright, architects Harry Schenck and Harry Williams, engineers and chemists Charles Allen Thomas and Carroll Hochwalt (both of whom went on to important roles in the Manhattan Project [Unit III, Dayton Project, NRHP 2006] and as executives in Monsanto Chemical Company), and mechanical engineer, chemist, and Priestly Medal recipient Thomas Midgley, Jr. The Engineers Club provided a relaxed environment in which these professionals and others could meet and discuss (or not discuss) their work, forging social and professional connections. In the autumn of 1922, the club's board, elected by the membership, endorsed a proclamation opposing proposed amendments to the Dayton city charter that might have changed the strong city manager form of government established in 1913.²⁷ For the 1923-1924 activity year, the club's statement of policy noted under "Activity in Civic Affairs" that city planning and the removal of the derelict Miami-Erie Canal bed (parts of which the city of Dayton later filled and paved to create Patterson Boulevard, one block east of the Engineers Club clubhouse) were its two principal areas of concern.²⁸ The club also occasionally rented its auditorium to outside groups for their use, though not without controversy from members who preferred that the club remain a resource especially for local engineers and people professionally connected with engineering.

The Engineers Club was not immediately affected by the 1929 crash of stock prices at the New York Stock Exchange; the club's membership actually increased from 799 to 837 between 1929 and 1930. However, membership levels soon fell as business slowed for local companies and they reduced their engineering staffs. At its lowest point in 1933, only 611 individuals maintained club membership. Recognizing that many engineers found maintaining club membership difficult, the Board of Governors decided in 1932 to eliminate the entrance fee charged new members; the board extended this waiver

²⁴ *Board of Governors' Minutes*, 4 May 1943.

²⁵ *Engineers Club Scrapbook*, 7 June 1921; *Board of Governors' Minutes*, 13 March 1922.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13 June 1922 (unnumbered page).

²⁷ See Sealander, 85-128, *passim*.

²⁸ *Board of Governors' Minutes*, 3 February 1922.

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several additional times during the 1930s.²⁹ The club also rented its facilities to outside groups, an action that proved controversial among club members even as it brought the club needed money. In 1935 the club's House Committee recommended that the Board of Governors not rent the clubhouse to non-members, stating that "it is quite impossible to maintain the Club as it should be maintained and allow its furnishings and its buildings to be damaged as has happened here in the past by renting out its facilities to non-members."³⁰ There is no evidence that the Board of Governors accepted the House Committee's recommendations. The club also responded to the Depression by lowering lunch prices in its restaurant; members could eat (and have a beer after the ratification of the twenty-first amendment to the U.S. Constitution) there for thirty-five cents per meal in 1933.³¹ Membership began to rebound in 1935, growing from 630 to 1,001 in 1941. When Edward Deeds died in 1960, the club towards which he and Charles Kettering directed significant attention during the 1920s had 1,130 members, established on Monument Avenue as a resource for engineering professionals from throughout the Dayton area and the United States. While the Engineers Club turned less and less of its attention to engineering issues by the early twenty-first century, opening its membership to professionals of all sorts, it still used the building contributed by Deeds and Kettering to host its own activities and community-oriented programs and meetings of many outside organizations.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1931-1934, 3 October 1932.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 23 October 1935.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 5 June 1935.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

This nomination encompasses the Engineers Club of Dayton's building between Monument Avenue on the north, Jefferson Street on the west, Lowe Lane on the south, and the property line between the Engineers Club and Wright State University's Eugene W. Kettering Center on the east. The Montgomery County Treasurer's Office identifies the parcel as R72 00311 0001.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary follows the property owned by the Engineers Club of Dayton for its clubhouse in 2006 and is the majority of the property acquired by the club for its 1918 clubhouse.

