42. Further Description of Important Interior and Exterior Features (Continued from page 1)

are sporadically spaced. A memorial to Oberlin’s Historic Elm Tree is on the southeast corner. Two other structures in this park include a bandstand that resembles a giant Chinese rickshaw in the northeast quadrant, and a Memorial Arch in the middle of the western edge. In the late 1990s sections of brick sidewalks along the perimeter of Tappan Square were re-laid. The asphalt paths are regularly coated with tar. None of the plants inside the square are original to this plot of land, and many non-native species inhabit the area.

43. History and Significance (Continued from page 1.)

off the square from the earliest days. From 1833 to 1836 the square had two structures: Tappan Hall which provided four recitation rooms and lodging for ninety men and the Big Tent, where church services and commencement exercises were held until 1843. By 1858, the Tent was gone (replaced by the First Congregational Church, across Lorain Street from the Square); Tappan Hall remained; and College Chapel, a new building, had been completed in 1855. In 1883 these buildings shared the square with French Hall and Society Hall. By 1908 French and Society Halls remained on the square with the new Memorial Arch and Spear Laboratory (OC General Catalogue, 1908).

In the early 20th century Oberlin College graduate and founder of ALCOA Aluminum, Charles Martin Hall, through a gift in his will, dictated the removal of all buildings from the Square. In 1914 the Olmsted Brothers of Boston offered a designed landscape plan for the square. In 1927 Spear Library was the last building to be removed. The cinder paths and wooden planks were replaced with brick walks, and only the Memorial Arch was left on the square.

In the 1960s Dutch Elm Disease brought down the elms that had lined the walkways, but a thoughtful tree-planting program has retained the square’s sense of nature. In 1984 Oberlin College President Frederick Starr revitalized the idea of community use of the Square through construction of a new bandstand (Blodgett). A national design competition was held and a design with Oriental themes, by Oberlin alumnus, Julian S. Smith, Ontario, Canada, was selected.

This site is significant for its history as the founding location of both the college and the town, and for its continuous use as a place where both community residents and students walk, enjoy music, and other social and solitary activities. Tappan Square was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1966. Tappan Square was listed by the City of Oberlin as an Oberlin City Landmark in November of 1997.