

CITY-WIDE HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

Ypsilanti, Michigan

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I. Introduction

The following written, graphic and photographic material represents a survey of historically and architecturally significant properties in the City of Ypsilanti, Michigan. The study area for this project consisted of the present (1982-83) incorporated area of the City of Ypsilanti.

While historical and architectural resources are described in some detail and on the basis of extensive research and field work, archaeological resources are described only briefly in an overview statement of past activity. No attempt was made to identify, document or nominate archaeological resources as part of the study.

The survey of Ypsilanti and the resulting National Register of Historic Places Multiple Resource Nomination meet several requirements; but the primary reason for carrying out this project was to utilize all of the tools that historic preservation offers for city development. Preservation has long been a tradition in Ypsilanti. Individuals have maintained their own residences at higher-than-expected standards while joining with others to see that important local structures were not destroyed.

The efforts of the Ladies Literary Association and the Quirk family to preserve noteworthy buildings were examples of preservation sensitivity early in the 1900's. Several Eastern Michigan University buildings have withstood periodic attempts to remove or modernize them, thanks to interested students, faculty members, and townspeople.

In more recent times, the city government has resisted the massive-scale urban renewal schemes that might have resulted in the destruction of much of Ypsilanti's historic building stock. Instead, city officials have been directly involved in historic preservation programs since 1972 or earlier, reflecting the concern of its citizens. In 1972, as a result of the passage in 1970 of Public Act 169, the Michigan law which provided for the establishment of historic districts and historic district commissions, the City council appointed a Historic District Study Committee to evaluate the city's historic and architectural resources; to determine the potential for one or more historic districts or landmark designations; and to embark on a program to encourage careful stewardship over these resources. In December of 1972, the Study Committee presented its report, recommending the establishment of one, large (for its time) historic district, to City Council. In February 1973, the Council designated the historic district as recommended by the Study Committee; later that year, the district was placed on the State Register.

The increasing popularity of historic preservation as a planning and economic development tool led to the first major preservation planning project in the city, the Depot Town Preservation Plan, prepared in 1976. This plan sought to encourage the revitalization of the original "eastern village," the location of the railroad stations, early riverfront mills and a fine group of Italianate commercial buildings. The area was considered to be dangerous and dilapidated, but a few residents and businesses looked beyond the conditions at the time to see the potential for a lively district for living, shopping and special events. The project was funded by the City and the Department of the Interior through

the Michigan History Division. The Depot Town story is one of the preservation success stories in the state. The area has become a vital, important, thriving specialty business area, one that has assumed a level of importance in the community far out of proportion to its size.

In 1977, the Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places; and, in the next year, the historic district ordinance was passed by the City Council. In February 1978, the Historic District Commission began meeting. The Commission has been busy ever since; in May of 1978, it added a sizeable section of the city, bounded by Maple, Oak and Prospect Streets, to the district. In 1979, the Ordinance was certified by the Secretary of the Interior, and the Commission began to assist owners with applications for historic preservation tax benefits. To facilitate these applications, and to provide a sound basis for consistent review of building permit requests, the Commission adopted the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings in 1979. In 1979, also, the City, the History Division and the Commission once again teamed up to undertake a preservation planning project, this time focusing on the city's other main commercial area, the Michigan Avenue commercial district. A thorough evaluation of the district's building stock was made, and facade recommendations, including implementation strategies, were presented in graphic form. The Downtown Facade Improvement Plan was completed in 1980.

With a sizeable portion of the city within the boundaries of the historic district, several hundred old buildings came under the review powers of

the Commission or the History Division when changes were proposed. In the case of alterations proposed by individuals, the Commission is charged with reviewing building permits to see that the alterations meet the Secretary's Guidelines. This review process has not been without controversy, as witnessed by the recent efforts of Michigan Avenue businessmen to remove the main business district from the Historic District because of perceived difficulties in meeting the rehabilitation standards and guidelines. In the case of City programs, those that utilize federal funds must meet the same standards; and, in fact, the City must abide by these standards for projects which affect resources outside the district boundaries but which are considered eligible for the National Register.

The present survey project was undertaken as a result of one of these federal programs, in this case the Community Development Department's housing rehabilitation program funded with Block Grant funds. This program requires that each house be reviewed for National Register eligibility; and if considered eligible, work must meet the Secretary's Standards. At the time the original National Register District was created, documentation requirements were considerably less stringent than they are now, particularly in terms of an accurate documentation of all buildings within the district boundaries. The original Ypsilanti district material contained no complete building-by-building inventory, no list of contributing and non-contributing buildings, and only brief statements summarizing research and significance. This lack of complete information meant that photos and other information for each potential

rehabilitation program subject house had to be sent to the Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer for a determination of significance, a time-consuming and ungainly process.

This problem was the impetus for the Community Development Department and the Historic District Commission to undertake a complete and thorough inventory of all historic and architectural resources within the city limits. In this way, the Community Development Department could expedite its housing rehabilitation program; the Historic District Commission would have the documentation it needed to carry out its duties and have a clear direction for future activities; and the Michigan History Division would have the inventory cards, maps and other documentation it desired to adequately describe and delineate all the significant properties and districts in Ypsilanti. In 1982, the City let a contract to Resource Design Group, a preservation planning firm in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to carry out a survey of the city's area and an inventory of significant properties and historic districts; and to prepare a National Register Multiple Resource Nomination based on the survey results. The project was funded by Block Grant funds and by a grant from the Department of the Interior administered by the Michigan Department of State. The project team consisted of Richard Macias, president of Resource Design Group and a registered landscape architect; Robert Schweitzer, a teacher in the historic preservation program at Eastern Michigan University; Malcolm Collins, AIA, a historic preservation architect and architectural historian; and Richard Neumann, AIA, an architect and former instructor in preservation at the University of Michigan College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

II. Statements of Significance

A. Architecture: Physical Description of Study Area

Ypsilanti, with a population of about 24,000, is firmly within the boundaries of the Detroit Metropolitan area, being some thirty-five miles from downtown Detroit and ten miles from the center of Ann Arbor. That location provides Ypsilanti with a "Big-City" atmosphere, while the city still maintains a small town character. The city is situated on the Huron River thirty miles inland from Lake Erie. The hills and bluffs of the river valley form the topographic character of the city.

Ypsilanti has always been closely tied with education and transportation. The city is the home of Eastern Michigan University and Cleary College. It has a major automotive plant within the city limits and a larger automotive facility just beyond its boundary. There is a strong retail and service sector which is dependent in part on the University. Aside from these major components, the economy is based upon a number of small manufacturing firms.

Because the University students represent almost one-half of the population and the campus accounts for a large part of the total area, the city itself is quite small and has a definite "small town" character. Residential streets are narrow and tree-lined. The majority of the traffic is confined to a few collector streets including some one-way pairs. The streets are laid out in the typical midwestern grid pattern, although river topography and early routes to adjacent towns dictated a

few diagonal streets. The residential and commercial building stock is of a consistent scale with few commercial structures being more than three stories in height. The majority of buildings are pre-1930's; thus the city has a distinctively historic character.

Ypsilanti is unusual because it has two separate central business districts. This resulted from the city's early development, when two rival settlements were established, one on either side of the Huron River. As the city grew, the business districts became part of a development pattern which saw the commercial areas connected by two major residential streets. This area, bounded by Cross, River, Huron and U.S. 12 (Michigan Avenue), was the center of most of the city's early development.

The major business district consists of several blocks along Michigan Avenue both east and west of the river. The historic downtown occupies several blocks immediately west of the Huron River. The core has always been dependent upon the highway traffic and draws customers from a wide area. U.S. 12 crosses the river and climbs a steep hill at the east end of the retail core. Beyond the bridge is a fine Art Deco masonry structure, (5c:19) formerly the Moose Lodge and before that an auto dealership. The remainder of the commercial district to the west consists of two and three-story Italianate commercial structures. A few examples of later styles can be found, such as 220-26, a three-story Renaissance Revival building, (18:22), though most have been covered with modern day false facades. At the western end of the district is a large Italianate structure built as the Hawkins House Hotel, now apartments (18:13).

Across the street to the south at 229 W. Michigan (50:10) is the old post office, a Beaux Arts edifice recently converted to a public library. This business district extends one and a half blocks to the north and south of Michigan Avenue along Washington, Huron and Pearl. Many of the best remaining commercial buildings are on these side streets.

The second business district, today known as Depot Town, is located along Cross and River Streets east of the river and is one mile north of Michigan Avenue. This commercial area developed to serve the mills and associated river industries, and later businesses related to the railroad. It is compact compared to the Michigan Avenue district, but it contains a fine collection of Italianate mercantile structures, most of which remain largely unaltered. This is in direct contrast to the buildings of Michigan Avenue which have been substantially modified. The Follett House Hotel on Cross Street (17:25) and the Michigan Central Railroad freight (73:34) and passenger (51:20) stations provide a sense of the original character of the area. In recent years an active redevelopment program based on preservation planning techniques has led to a revitalization of Depot Town. Several buildings have been rehabilitated; streetscape improvements have been made; the riverbanks have been incorporated into the city park system; and the freight station has been converted to a farmers' market. The area hosts several special events based on historic themes each year.

Industrial structures were historically clustered along the river banks and the railroad; this trend continues to the present day. Two of the

earliest remaining industrial buildings are on N. River: the Shaffer Machinery Works (27:33), (306-312) from 1840 and the Thompson block at River and Cross (8:31), (400-412 N. River), an early wagon factory, circa 1860. Most new industrial development has occurred to the east of the downtown.

Several architecturally important institutional buildings remain throughout the city. The old high school, a fine Colonial Revival brick building on Cross Street (29: 2); the Old Ypsilanti Fire Station at 110 W. Cross, a Romanesque structure adjacent to the high school (29: 3); several fine churches in a variety of styles; the Water Works Standpipe; and the core buildings of Eastern Michigan University are prime examples.

The most historically significant residential structures occupy two streets, Huron and River, which run along opposite sides of the Huron River, connecting the two business districts. Some of the earliest houses in Ypsilanti were constructed on these and adjacent streets. These two streets, in contrast to later residential streets, are quite wide and reflect their early importance. Many of the leading early citizens erected substantial dwellings backing on the river, in close proximity to their businesses. Styles from the settlement period and throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are represented. Classic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Octagon and Tudor homes of the highest quality line the two streets. A wide variety of building materials are in evidence, including brick, stone, wood and stucco.

To the east of Depot Town lies an early residential neighborhood that developed along with the mills and other industries on the east shore of the river. This neighborhood, including the business area, once separated itself from the rest of the community and established a separate government as the city of East Ypsilanti (the segregation lasted only twelve months). The housing stock is diverse with large mansion homes such as the Gilbert (Second Empire, 227 N. Grove), (66:13) and Hutchinson (Queen Anne, 600 N. River), (33: 2) houses and smaller bungalows and Queen Anne dwellings bounded by Forest, Prospect and River Streets and the Railroad, this section maintains its own distinct identity to this day.

South of Michigan Avenue near the Huron River is a section of the city that has always had a mixture of residential scales. There are several large homes, such as the Glover house (22:26), (118 S. Washington, a massive Queen Anne structure with rounded tower) on both Huron and Washington Streets. As one moves farther south from the business district, the homes become smaller in scale but not lacking in detailing. Many of these homes, however, have had their siding covered and architectural details removed.

To the north of Michigan Avenue and west of the Huron River is an area of high quality residences dating from the 1840's to the 1890's. These homes represent the dwellings of the second wave of well-to-do citizens who could not obtain lots close to the river. As the University expanded, faculty members purchased and built homes in this area. The quality of

architectural detail is high with many finely detailed Gothic and Queen Anne homes covered with vergeboard and shingles. One of the earliest homes in the area is now the Ladies' Literary Club at 218 N. Washington (19:23); it has classic columns and dentil moldings. Due to the area's closeness to the University there has been a number of conversions to student apartments and a resulting tendency to cover siding with man-made materials and to remove some detailing.

The neighborhood to the south of the University to Michigan Avenue and between Summit and Normal streets is another distinct residential area. Here there begins to be a mixture of early twentieth century styles such as Tudor, Bungalow and Craftsman. These homes are intermixed with earlier Queen Anne and Colonial Revival residences to give a turn-of-the-century flavor to the area. This neighborhood remains a strong single-family area with only minimal intrusions from campus landlords on the north.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES - A GLOSSARY

Architectural style is used to delineate structures to allow better analyzation their richness. The Oxford English Dictionary defines style as a definite type of architecture, distinguished by special characteristics of structure and ornament. The buildings of Ypsilanti can be classified into several distinct types. One can better distinguish the more remarkable buildings by placing them into style catagories. These remarkable buildings are referred to as "Landmarks". Landmarks reflect the highest orders of style. Architect William Caudill has written that real historical styles are meaningful symbols of the history of humanity, symbols of power, symbols of ingenuity, and symbols of greatness. The great buildings of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome speak loud and clear about the people of that time; how they thought, their values, style of living and what they did to advance humankind. So too do the homes and commercial buildings of Ypsilanti speak of the history and people of nineteenth century Michigan. The architecture is rich in form and detail. It includes examples of styles ranging from the early days of settlement in the 1830's to many fine Twentieth Century styles. The descriptions below attempt to give a brief historical summary of each style and to relate typical features of the most common styles. The buildings of Ypsilanti contain a number of outstanding and significant examples from each of the major styles of the period (1830 to 1940). They also contain many interesting examples where the typical features of several styles were used on a single structure.

CLASSIC REVIVAL 1830 to 1860

Many times spoken of as the Greek Revial or the Roman Revival,

Classic style became popular on the East Coast soon after the American Revolution. As the new nation began to search for its identity, a strong tie to the democracy of ancient Greece and Rome developed. Thomas Jefferson studied classic architecture while in Europe and fathered its introduction into major American buildings with the design of the state capital building at Richmond, Virginia in the 1780's. Other notable American architects followed suit, and many national examples of the Classic Revival can be found throughout the Eastern half of the country. Two noteworthy specimens are the U.S. Treasury building in Washington D.C. by Robert Mills and the Second National Bank of The United States by William Strickland in Philadelphia. This taste in architecture soon spread throughout the nation with columned-porched homes stretching from Maine to Michigan.

The major prototype buildings of the early Classic Revival period were constructed of stone to emulate their ancient counterparts. As the fashion became more broadbased and widespread its construction materials became whatever the locality provided; cobblestone, brick and wood were the most popular materials in the Michigan area. The ornament of these buildings was based on classical Greek elements. Columns, pilasters, capitals and dentils were formed in wood faithful to their ancient Greek counterparts. The massing of these structures was usually rectangular with a low triangular gabled pedimental roof. The short or pedimental end of the building most often faced the street. Many Classic Revival buildings had small one-story wings attached to either or both sides. This configuration has become known as the "hen and chicks" type. Often one or more porches with columns were

constructed across the front and/or at the wings. Windows and doors were boldly defined and strongly vertical. The doors tended to be paneled with six or fewer sections. The windows were long and double hung with combinations of four and six panes. Shutters, many times painted dark green, flanked each opening. The most popular type of exterior covering was wood clapboard or board and batten, painted white or a light pastel yellow or gray.

While simple compared to later nineteenth century styles, the Classic Revival structure was nonetheless covered with many designs and motifs of fine quality workmanship. Anthemion leaf designs and egg and dart moldings were popular as was the "Greek Key" design in upper story window grills. Entry doors were surrounded by side and transom lights (windows). Facade windows were often topped with heavy moldings called ears or crossettes. The cornice or frieze was traditionally wide and in many cases contained dentil moldings. But the most notable feature of the design is the wide return cornice on the gable end. This element, along with columns used as pilasters or standing alone in porches, describe the hallmark of the style.

One of the finest examples of this style in the city is at 218 West Washington. This one and a half story building with a one story wing was constructed in 1842 and features square columns and finely detailed dentil moldings. Another fine instance is that at 125 N. Huron. Done in brick, this two story temple style has full height round columns in the Doric mode. Fronting as it does on Huron street it must have been an impressive dwelling dwarfing all others in the city for most of the nineteenth century.

During the late 1830's, Americans became increasingly entranced by a romantic movement that migrated from Europe. This movement featured a fascination with the exotic, the Middle Ages, and the untamed wilderness. The fuel for this movement was supplied, in part, by the gothic novels of Sir Walter Scott. The first American champion of the gothic style in architecture was Andrew Jackson Downing, whose books on residences helped spread the gospel of romantic styles. Downing was one of the first writers who called for designing homes not just for the wealthy, but for the common man as well. The collaborator on Downing's books was Alexander Jackson Davis who designed and built Lyndhurst on the Hudson in 1838 for William Pauling. Lyndhurst has been termed the finest gothic residence in America. It is a rambling stone residence with pointed arched windows, rich in picturesque irregularity. Most gothic mode buildings tend to be residential and compact. They have a much higher pitched roof than the Classic Revival and are richer in exterior detail. Ornate porches with finely detailed posts and railings plus verge-board on the eaves were characteristic of the gothic style residences. These romantic homes often featured pointed-arched-windows and were painted in a variety of colors from tan to blue, but never in white. While Gothic Revival commercial buildings are quite rare, the church building became the most popular use of the style. Ypsilanti is blessed with a number of fine Gothic houses. The most unique is at 118 College place, it was designed by Downing and appears in his book on the architecture of country houses. Other notable examples are located at 103 N. Adams (containing lancet windows and detailed vergeboard) 513 N. Adams and 301 Grove (with arched porch and pointed shutters).

ITALIANATE 1840 to 1880

In Downing's books on country houses there were many references to the Italian villa style, also termed the the Tuscan or General Grant style. The former because of its likeness to farm houses in northern Italy and the latter to its popularity during and after the Civil War. This mode of dwelling became extremely popular in Michigan during the 1860's and 1870's. Nationally important examples exist in Southern Michigan, with Marshall and Ionia boasting some of the best. The style is characterized by a square two-story central section with a variety of squares or rectangular additions arranged asymetrically about it. A square tower was occasionally part of the composition, although many of the homes were simple cubes. The roof was usually flat or very low pitched and could contain a belvedere or viewing room. The eaves were extended over the walls and were supported by large brackets of uniquely ornate designs. Windows were long and slender with rounded tops; many also were adorned with lintels or hoods encompassing flower or leaf designs. The first bay windows occurred in the Italianate style; they were small and decorated with brackets similar to those under the eaves. Porches carried square pillars and were tucked into niches in the asymmetrical design. Balconies set atop porches or over large brackets were common. The main building materials of the style were brick and stone but many fine examples are finished in wood clapboard. The two finest examples in the city are at 324 W. Forest (a massive brick structure with elaborate brackets and arched windows) and 708 Congress which is another Downing-designed

...structure with slight vergeboard and containing a metal roof. There are many excellent examples of this type in the city and their richness compares favorably to such famous Italianates as in Ionia.

SECOND EMPIRE 1870 to 1890

After the Civil War the dominant fashion in public buildings was the Mansard-roofed French import. The style has its base in the rebuilding of the Louvre in Paris as well as many other grand public buildings of the French capital. The chief domestic proponent of the style was federal government supervising architect Alfred B. Mullett. His striking State, War, and Navy building in Washington begun in 1871 is an outstanding example of the type in America. The major design component of the style is the Mansard roof that extends the top floor into useable space. This was not a major residential type of building but when examples are found they are often Italianate in massing with a Mansard roof on the body of the house or on a tower. Large heavy-looking dormers were usually placed on the roof giving the building an even more ornate appearance. Many times the roof was of colored slate in diamond patterns or stripes; metal and wood shingle roofs were also used. The most common building material of the Second Empire taste was brick, but many fine wood clapboard examples can also be found. The most famous Second Empire building in the town is the Old City Hall located at 304 N. Huron and its carriage barn in the rear. The combination of materials and detailing make these two structures a rare

architectural combination.

OCTAGON 1850 to 1870

One of the strangest and unique building forms in America (they are found in no other country) are the eight-sided Octagon dwellings. Developed by phrenologist Orson Fowler through his lectures and books, this mode of building was popular for only a short time at mid-century. Fowler's premise was that the octagon was the closest form to the naturally perfect circle shape and therefore provided the most perfect building form. While his building type proved anything but successful, the building technique he employed (sand & gravel) proved years ahead of its time, for the use of concrete on a large scale awaited the twentieth century. Most octagon buildings were residences and fitted out in Italianate manner. Some were wildly decorated and others were used as schools and farm buildings. Michigan is the proud possessor of some forty-four octagon buildings, two of which are located in Ypsilanti. The finest of those is on River street, and while being plain in detailing still recalls an era of speciality in American architectural history. The other, now only partially visible is located on South Huron.

QUEEN ANNE 1870 to 1910

This style also has European origins. Stemming from the work of British architect Richard Norman Shaw in the 1860's, this manner grew to popularity in America in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century. In England the buildings of the Queen Anne style were supposed to represent a historical revival of the pre-Georgian buildings from the days of Queens Ann and Elizabeth. In America the style was called "Brick-a-Brack" or "Tossed Salad" because of the richness and variety of its decoration. Almost no type of building material or pattern was left untried. Wood, stone, brick, and terra-cotta were mixed into wild shapes and designs to create the most visually interesting homes of the century. The taste is characterized by a variety of forms and shapes including, high pitched gables, towers and turrets. Windows were large, and many contained stained glass. Roofs were of metal or slate with ornate ridge boards, chimneys were mammoth and complex. Siding included not only clapboard but fish scale shingles and other machine cut wood designs. Many of the houses carried large wrap-around porches with turned posts and railings. The painting of these sometimes colossal homes was multi-shaded with as many as five different colors. The city is rich in design excellence in the Queen Anne manner. There are many houses that can excite the eye with textural delight and detail. Two of the best are at 601 Forest (with its large tower and grand porches) and 600 N. river with its ever changing variety of facade textures and window shapes.

COLONIAL REVIVAL 1880 to 1920

Emerging from the centennial celebration of 1876, a period of sentimental remembrances initiated, linked to America's colonial past. A situation similar to a fad developed in which an entire culture revived around the ideas, lifestyles and buildings of the pre-revolutionary war days. There were hundreds of attempts to revive colonial arts and crafts, including the details of architecture. These attempts can be classified into four categories of house types; Georgian, Dutch, Modern and Vernacular. The basis of these classifications is the massing of the building. For example the Georgian Colonial Revival houses resembled the southern Virginia plantation house and those of Williamsburg. They are rectangular in shape and have dormers with symmetrical window and door openings. They tended to be of brick with white wood details. The Dutch variety is typified by the four-part gambrel roof. The modern type is closer to what is being built today, with little detail except around door and window openings. Vernacular Colonial Revival homes tended to have Queen Anne type irregular massing and many have a slight return cornice. Details on all these buildings are strongly classical featuring columns, dentil moldings, palladian windows and pediment window hoods. Among many fine examples of these varied style are a fine Georgian specimen at 105 N. Adams with stuccoed walls and three arched dormers, and an exquisite Dutch type at 128 N. Normal featuring two front facing peaks.

This typically one-to-one-and-a-half story home is singly the most popular built in the period. It is the forefather of the modern ranch house. Inspiration for these homes came from India and the long low buildings used there as wayside stops between cities. The name itself is an adaption of an Indian word. On Bungalows the roof ridge paralalled the street, and gently sloping roofs often covered a large porch that ran the length of the house. Other features of the style are exposed rafter ends at the roof, exposed braces on porches, wide windows in bands and large shed-roof dormers. Building materials were brick (the most popular) wood shingle and stucco. Ypsilanti has two wonderful examples, one at 211 Ferris in shingle with cobblestone chimney and porch and one at 304 Jarvis completely done in cobblestones.

CRAFTSMAN 1900 to 1940

The Arts and Crafts movement that began in England in the late nineteenth century was the inspiration for this house type. In America the leading proponent of the fashion was Gustav Stickley. He published a magazine in the teens and twenties entitled "The Craftsman", which summoned the return to a more simple method of construction and decoration. In the Craftsman magazine an abundance

of plans were pictured. Many of these were simple box or cube type structures, very simple in decoration. These houses were usually two or two-and-a-half stories high with a large dormer similar to the bungalow. Craftsman homes also featured a full facade porch supported by colonial or rustic posts. Roofs were often medium pitch in height or hipped. The style, often called the box house appeared in mail order house plan books such as those of the Radford company, and the Aladdin Company of Bay City. They were intended for the larger and home-desiring middle classes who were beginning to inhabit the city edges and suburbs. Their cost was modest—\$1,950 to \$3,500. In various ways craftsman homes were similar to the mid-century Italianate cubes that were built in the Civil War era. Many of these modern cube homes were very simple in decoration, unlike the houses shown in Stickleys magazine. Many appear with extended roof rafters, rubble porch posts, bands of windows with three-over-one double-hung sash. Exterior surfaces were mixed, with clapboard the most popular along with stucco. Shingles and Tudor-like half timbering were also popular surface materials. These homes were well received and are quite common in many midwestern towns. Some finer examples exist at 120 & 315 N. Adams and 329 Maple. All of these homes feature a fine combination of surface textures and windows.

TUDOR REVIVAL 1900 to 1940

This popular style of building, often called the English cottage or Jacobean Revival, was extremely prevalent in the early twentieth century. The building type takes its name from the English royal family that reigned from 1485 to 1603. In many ways these buildings are architectural models of rural English manor houses and Cotswold cottages, with a little of the Arts & Crafts movement included. The basic theory behind this type of structure was again the return to a more simple, honest, handcrafted method of construction. Some of the first renditions of this revival came from the mind of Richard Norman Shaw in England and in America by the famous Richard Morris Hunt. The major features of these homes were their irregular massing (due to the emulation of European homes with successive additions), high pitched gables and exposed framing members (the tudor beaming effect). Massive chimneys on slate roofs over brick exteriors were common. Much of the brickwork was elaborate featuring pressed-in designs and patterns, lintels were made of stone. Stucco, stone and wood were used in combination to produce a picturesque "countryside effect". Windows were casement type, many with diamond panes. Doors could have rounded or arched heads with rustic nail head designs on the surface. The home at 209 North Huron is one of several fine examples, with its diamond design brickwork on a massive chimney facing the street. The 16 South Normal residence has an interesting combination of brick and stucco on the facade and features an arched entryway.

PERIOD REVIVALS 1920 to Present

Many of the residential styles constructed since the 1920's can be grouped under a general heading of this type. Spanish Colonial, Cape cod, some mixtures of the colonial revival styles and Chateau, are all placed into this category. Like many of the earlier styles these were also based upon European prototypes. These homes had faithful renderings of details but made use of the most current materials and floor plans. A good example of one of these buildings is at 410 West Cross where a Spanish and Tudor combination residence stands.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

This type of structure is usually defined as one that is naive in its formal use of stylistic details. In other words, its features are not exactly as those that are found on higher styled buildings. It is always difficult to characterize a vernacular building, but usually they are simple in form and have a minimum of detail. In our study of Ypsilanti many homes that at one time had possibly belonged to a identifiable style are now, because of the removal of details, classified as vernacular. Also buildings that fit no standard measure of style are placed into this category.

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

The major religious architecture in the city falls into three distinct categories: Gothic, Romanesque and Neo-Classic Revival. As is the case with most religious buildings Gothic was the favorite style of building in Ypsilanti. Throughout the nineteenth century a series of religious revivals swept the nation, and with each succeeding revival a wave of church building followed. The century was strongly religious and communities often revolved around their religious organizations rather than their governments or social institutions. The earliest Gothic Revival churches were brick with thick walls and deeply set windows framed by pointed arches. Walls were often times buttressed. Roof pitches were generally high but roof shapes were simple in design, spire topped towers often were present as part of the plan. Later designs were more complex and were carried out in stone or more elaborate brickwork. Larger, more massive, towers were present and the use of arched entryways was also common. Stained or colored glass has always been popular in churches but as the century wore on and glass took on even more importance, churches began to be embellished to a larger extent. There are four outstanding Gothic style churches in the city. 289 North Washington features a well detailed tower and large quatrefoil windows. 120 North Huron is a massive structure with fine arched entryways and long narrow windows. 201 North River is constructed of stone and has a notable tower and finely detailed windows. The church at 214 North Adams, also done in stone, features simple openings and represents the later era of late century Gothic design. Starkweather Chapel in the Highland Cemetery is a striking example of the Romanesque Revival. This polychromatic stone one-and-a-half

story building has many details and Sullivanesque pressed brickwork. Romanesque buildings usually have a brighter surface than the Gothic. The use of colored stone and terra cotta were also hallmarks of the style. The cemetery itself with its rolling hills and winding roads is a direct result of the naturalistic trends in park design throughout the century.

At 300 North Washington stands a large twin-towered Neo-Classic Revival church. This building reflects some of the influence of the Colonial Revival. Its dentil moldings, pilasters and triangular pediments are all part of the mystique. The symmetrically placed windows, red brick and white trim are copied from Jefferson's University of Virginia and Bulfinch's Boston State House.

CIVIC AND COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE

The civic and commercial areas of a town were its pride in the nineteenth century. Visitors would proudly be shown the "Main Street", the Hotel and the Railroad station. The American towns' uniqueness comes from its commercial and civic buildings, most of which portray a special meaning to its residents and are themselves one-of-a-kind structures. Acting as focal points, these stores and firehouses created a sense of neighborhood and community.

Commercial and civic structures often share common architectural characteristics, although commercial buildings tended to be built prior to civic buildings. Thus in Ypsilanti there is an abundance

of Italianate commercial buildings but few built for civic purposes. Most schools and public buildings tend to be of late nineteenth or early twentieth century vintage.

ITALIANATE 1860 to 1890

Technological advances and the availability of large amounts of capital helped influence the type of commercial buildings in the period of the Civil War to the turn of the century. These so-called Italianate commercial structures were usually built of brick, and were two or more stories tall, with arched windows above and a commercial storefront at the ground level. They had varying degrees of ornamentation including wood or metal cornices (with brackets), brick corbelling, stone or metal window hood moldings, lower cornices and cast metal storefront columns. The vast majority of all midwestern "Main Streets" were constructed in this mode. Because the style was so versatile it remained popular long after the residential style waned from popular fashion. There are several good examples of the style on Michigan Avenue, at 101 and 202-206. (Quite possibly there are many more hiding behind modern metal fronts.) Depot Town likewise has some excellent examples in the Follete House, the Oliver House, 52 E. Cross (featuring some Moorish first floor windows) and the railroad freight station.

COLONIAL REVIVAL 1880 to 1920

This style is sometimes mixed in classification with the Beaux Arts Classicism style. Buildings are simple in form but with more complex brickwork. Many of the familiar classic details are present such as pediments and cornices with dentils. Windows usually were square and had flat stone caps. Ypsilanti has three outstanding examples of this revival style. The Masonic Lodge at 76 N. Huron; with its columned entryway, 209 Pearl, and the Public Library (old Post Office) at 229 W. Michigan.

ROMANESQUE 1870 to 1910

Buildings of this type were generally of a rough masonry construction. Many also featured large arched openings. Civic buildings often contained towers (firehouses were quite popular in this style). 111-113 Pearl is the best Romanesque structure in the city with its four massive second-story windows. 119 N. Huron also displays a giant arch over two stories. The old firestation at 110 West Cross is a fine example of the civic building in Romanesque; with its tower it stands as a landmark for the whole east side.

ART DECO 1920 to 1950

The 1920's saw new stylistic influences from Europe that finally broke the classic tradition. The style represented a mode of decor that was particularly rectilinear, with geometrical curves playing a

secondary role. It was not only an architectural style but also applied to clothing, furniture and jewelry. 29-31 N. Washington, 64 N. Huron, 2 West Michigan and the Ypsilanti High School Gymnasium are all fine examples of this modernistic style.

ECLECTIC

There are always structures that defy specific style categories. These buildings tend to have either a multitude of styles represented or make their own statements about style and taste. One such Ypsilanti building is the Water Tower on Washtenaw. This large stone and shingle structure is a landmark visible from several miles away and is the unique identifying feature as one enters the city from the west.

B. Historical Significance

When the Northwest Territory was established by Congress in 1787, Detroit was already a busy, if not thriving, settlement serving as a center for fur and Indian trading. The area changed hands several times, coming under American control after the War for Independence. At the time of the establishment of the Territory of Michigan in 1805, two thirds of the population of Detroit was French, with the rest British or American citizens. A good deal of trading, trapping and exploration had been undertaken by the French in the area around Detroit. After the War of 1812 removed the British influence from the region that was to become southeast Michigan, Territorial Governor Lewis Cass ordered the Michigan Territory surveyed. The establishment of a land office in Detroit in 1818 led to the opening of the area to settlement by Americans, who used Detroit as a port of entry from the east.

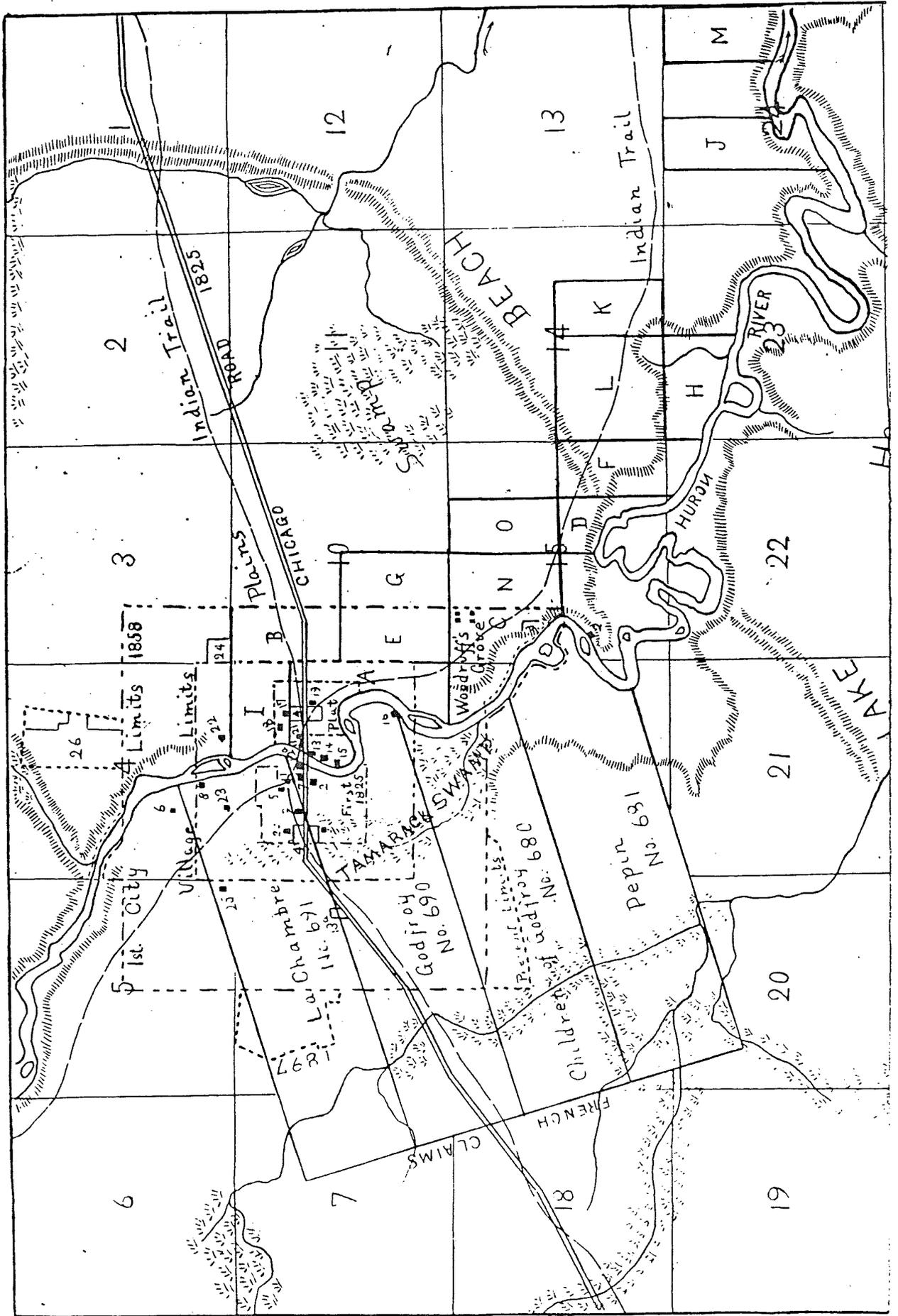
Nine years prior to the land office opening, three Frenchmen, Colonel Gabriel Godfroy, Romaine LeChambre and Francoise Pepin, established a trading post on the Huron (then Pottowatamie) River 25 miles inland from Lake Erie (there is some evidence that the post was actually established much earlier, but it was registered with the Territorial Government in 1808). The location was chosen due to access via the navigable river to Lake Erie, and the convergence of several Indian trails leading from the interior to Detroit, Lake Erie, Monroe and Canada. The site was characterized by hardwood forests with picturesque oak stands, small lakes, salt springs and clearings, which to many early arrivals looked man-made and were referred to as "groves." Several Indian tribes hunted in the area. The area was so supportive of animal life that rival tribes shared its bounty with few problems.

Godfroy's trading post, a log structure located on the west side of the river just north of the present Michigan Avenue bridge in Ypsilanti, was the first structure built in what was to be Washtenaw County. The post thrived until the various treaties, including the Treaty of Saginaw signed by Governor Cass in 1819, forced the Indians westward and opened all of Washtenaw County to public sale.

Having established their trading operation in 1809, the three Frenchmen purchased deeds to 2632 acres of land on the west side of the Huron. These came to be known as the French Claims and would play an important part in the development of Ypsilanti. The French Claims were the first lands platted and sold in the Ypsilanti area. They were subsequently subdivided and sold, beginning the era of land speculation that characterized frontier town development.

The second pioneer effort in the Ypsilanti vicinity was that of Benjamin Woodruff and a group of Ohioans wishing to purchase Michigan land, the Congress having authorized the sale of thousands of acres in 1822. This group chose a site a mile south of Godfroy's post in 1823, and commenced to build a settlement. By most accounts, Godfroy's had been abandoned by that time; and it appeared that the new settlement, called Woodruff's Grove, might be the commercial center of the area, particularly after Washtenaw County's boundaries were defined in 1822. However, in 1825, the French Claims were transferred to three Detroit residents, Judge August Brevoort Woodward, John Stewart and William Harwood. Harwood had already purchased over 100 acres north of Woodruff's Grove on the east

YPSILANTI.



side of the Huron. Woodward, who was responsible for the surveying of the Chicago Road (now U.S. 12) which followed the Sauk Indian Trail connecting Detroit with Chicago, saw the development potential of the claims, which contained land that possessed more potential for water power and was more open and level than that at Woodruff's Grove. With the completion of the road survey, Woodward, Harwood and Stewart began to develop their claims, speculating heavily by selling lots. When the road passed north of Woodruff's Grove, Woodruff and his neighbors picked up stakes and moved to the center of the new town, which was named Ypsilanti, in honor of the Greek patriots Demetrius and Alexander Ypsilanti, by Judge Woodward.

The old Godfroy cabin was the first residence in the new village, serving as home for Oliver Whitmore, Justice of the Peace. The first county election to send a delegate to Congress was held there in May of 1825.

As the Erie Canal and other improvements in transportation eased the hardships involved in settling the frontier, Ypsilanti developed along the lines of pioneer settlements throughout the Northwest Territory. Most settlers were from New York and New England. They brought their architecture, ideals, and enterprising spirit with them, so the early development in Ypsilanti had a decidedly Yankee nature.

Land-use patterns were determined which still apply to this day. Early industry, consisting primarily of flour and lumber milling, clustered around the river with much of the activity being on the east side of the

river north of the Chicago Road. This was due to the fall of the river in that area, and the influence of early developers such as Mark Norris who acquired land and built the mills. A business district developed adjacent to the mills, along Cross Street east of the river. A second business district, centering at first on servicing travellers and outfitting those moving on west (Ypsilanti was for several years a primary outfitting center for westward and northward migration in Michigan) developed along the Chicago Road (later called Congress Street, now Michigan Avenue). Both districts were also commercial centers for the agricultural development of the surrounding rural areas. Both commercial areas continued to develop and diversify, resulting in a considerable rivalry between the two, which still exists to some extent today.

The village was platted in 1825. Commercial buildings were to be found on both sides of the river by that year. As the two business districts developed, residential areas grew around them. The finest residences from the early days through 1900 were to be found along Congress Street west of and within the commercial district, along Huron Street to the west of and running parallel to the river and River Street, to the east of and parallel to the Huron. Two public squares were laid out, one each at the east and the west ends of Congress Street.

The development of Ypsilanti and of transportation systems proceeded together. Washtenaw County was established in 1826 (being a part of Wayne County prior to that date). Ypsilanti was incorporated as a village in 1832. Although the Chicago Road had been surveyed under

Judge Woodward's direction several years earlier, the Chicago Pike, also known as the Sauk Trail, did not officially open until 1835, thereafter becoming the great road to the west with new towns springing up along its length. Ypsilanti's first great period of growth resulted from its strategic location on the road. Travel from Detroit had been by stage-coach since 1830; and by 1832, three stage lines served Ypsilanti.

Several efforts were made to open the river to commercial navigation, but none of these succeeded. The great leap forward occurred in February of 1838 when the first train of the Central Railroad (later the Michigan Central, then New York Central, now Conrail) arrived at the depot located at Cross and River Streets in Ypsilanti. The line reached Chicago in 1852. Milling, lumber and real estate interests had succeeded in getting the railroad to locate on the east side, resulting in a good deal of development occurring around the depot. A second railroad came to town in 1870, connecting Ypsilanti with Hillsdale, later becoming a branch of the New York Central.

Although the coming of the railroad was seen as a boom to the town's development, in actuality it led to a slow decline at most, or a stagnation, at least, in the industrial growth of Ypsilanti (growth in other sectors of the economy kept the city as a whole in relative prosperity). As previously mentioned, milling and outfitting/agricultural supply were the major industries. As the railroad pushed west, the mills and stores came to serve only the immediate area surrounding Ypsilanti. Thus, no major industrial expansion occurred (with the exception of paper manufacturing) from the time of major milling activity of 1830 to 1870 to the Detroit area's automotive boom in the early 1900's.

While developing rapidly, Ypsilanti still had the appearance of a frontier community in the 1840's. Most stores, residences and mills were roughly built of wood (though a few dignified wood and brick homes could be seen). The village was closely bounded by dense forests, rolling hills and swamps. Roads were often impassable in winter and spring.

In part, making up for Ypsilanti's failure to develop into a major industrial center was its emergence as an important focus of public education in Michigan. The first schoolhouse was built in 1832; and from that date through the 1840's various opportunities for public and private education existed. Several early efforts to provide elementary and secondary courses led to the establishment of the Ypsilanti Seminary. This institution began as a private school, but the town saw the value of public education and purchased the Seminary to provide it. The Model School, as it was called, opened its doors in 1849, accepting boarding students from out of town as well as local residents. This school was said to be the first "graded" school in Michigan, and was highly regarded throughout the state.

Simultaneously with the development of the Seminary/Model School, the Michigan State Normal School (now Eastern Michigan University) got its start. Founded in 1849, its history dates to 1837 when the Michigan State Legislature passed an act to select a suitable site for a school to train teachers. Several communities vied for the school, with Ypsilanti being successful on the basis of a generous offer of land, money and community support. The first building, Old Main (demolished)

was dedicated in 1852, with the first class enrollment listed as 122. The State Normal College at Ypsilanti was the fifth teaching college established in the United States, and the first west of the Allegheny Mountains. From this one building on a small site at the western edge of town (on Cross Street) has developed the present Eastern Michigan University campus consisting of 42 buildings on 459 acres. Enrollment today stands at more than 18,000.

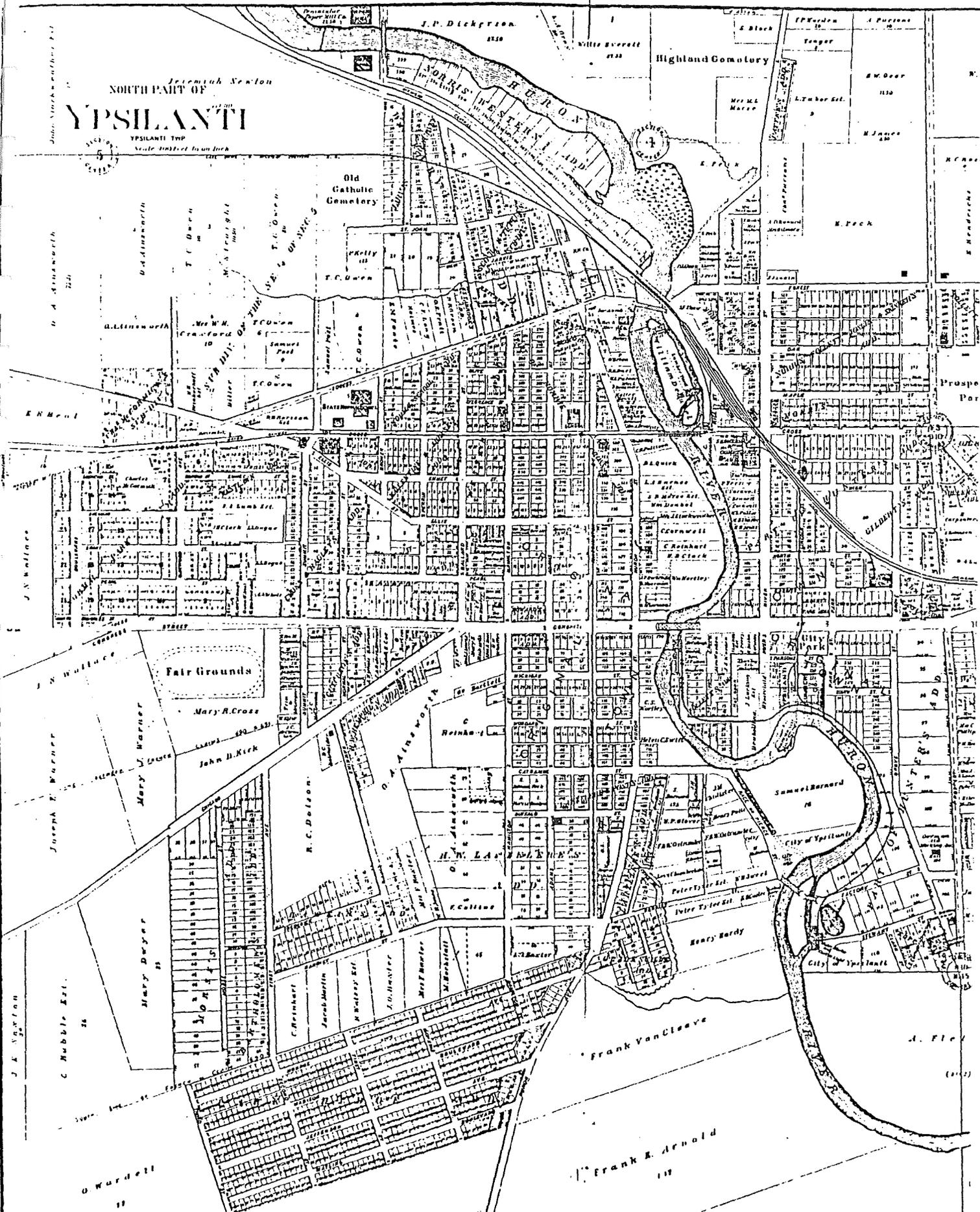
Ypsilanti's first Black families, who located in town in 1842, opened a strong association with black history. With the rise of anti-slavery sentiment in the North came the establishment of the Underground Railroad in the 1850's. There were several stations in Ypsilanti, with several Black and white "conductors." The town as a whole was tolerant, if not supportive, of this activity. The Black population remained small until the industrial boom of the 1910's and 1920's; but many Blacks were prominent in town affairs from the early days. The Black community has been centered on the south side of the Congress Street business district for many years, due to the presence there of early Black schools and churches.

The face of the Congress Street business district was changed substantially as the result of a disastrous fire in 1851. As in so many other communities, the quickly-built wood structures typical of the day offered little resistance to fire. Thirty-three buildings were destroyed; but soon new well-built and substantial-looking brick buildings were rising to take their places.

YPSILANTI

Jeremiah Sewton
NORTH PART OF

YPSILANTI TWP
Scale 1000 Feet to an Inch



YPSILANTI

SOUTH PART OF

Burton O. Jeerman

YPSILANTI TWP
Scale 1000 Feet to an Inch

The previously-mentioned competition between the "East Village" and the "West Side" continued to grow during the dynamic 1840's and 1850's. The east boasted of its mills and railroad station, the west of its merchants and the town post office. Fear of one side or the other receiving inadequate returns on its tax dollars led to the secession of the east side from the village in 1857 to set up East Ypsilanti. A president and board of trustees were elected; but apparently fears and jealousies were overcome by the realization that promotion and government service would suffer from the division. In 1858, the sides were reconciled and the State Legislation chartered the City of Ypsilanti. The total population was estimated at 5,000. Maps of the period show the layout of the city to be close to that of the district proposed in this nomination in terms of the extent and boundaries of development.

The industrial character of the Huron Riverfront continued to develop as new, small industries located along the river and the railroad, mills expanded and such new facilities as a gas plant for street lighting (1858) were built. Bridges had been built at Congress (Michigan Avenue), Cross Street, and Forest (only two additional bridges, on Spring Street and Leforge Street, have been built since).

When the Civil War broke out, Ypsilanti was caught in the patriotic fever; the city's contribution of men and commerce were proudly made; but the continued development of the city progressed with little interruption. Small industries such as breweries, carriage component manufacturers, cabinet making, and others continued to open; some survived for long periods, others quickly failed. The Normal School expanded at

a rapid rate, and the area's merchants and services came to depend a great deal on the students who were attracted to the school.

A major industrial development was the establishment of the Peninsula Paper Company in 1867. While several small paper mills had existed previously, none were of the scale of the Peninsula. Located just northwest of the city limits on the south bank of the Huron (near LeForge Street), the mill prospered, in part thanks to its owners' ties to the Chicago Tribune, resulting in an exclusive contract with that newspaper to supply paper. The company built a second mill in 1873, while another mill, that of the Ypsilanti Paper Company, was built in 1874 about a half mile west of the Peninsula. The Peninsula Paper Company continues in operation today, in several buildings adjacent to the LeForge Street bridge.

Real estate development continued during the war with equal activity on the east, west and south sides. The Congress Street and Cross Street business districts continued to prosper and serve their areas of town (with some specialization drawing those from "cross-town" as well).

From the end of the Civil War in 1865 to 1870, the Normal School continued to expand its enrollment and facilities. The city began to provide a wider range of services, and such organizations as the Ladies Library Association and the Old Lyceum provided for cultural needs. Many fires occurred in the business districts, resulting in imposing Victorian-era, brick replacement structures. An organized fire department was established

in 1873, financed largely by the Cornwell Paper Mill, which had an interest in efficient fire protection.

The industrial economy of Ypsilanti experienced a brief boom in the 1880's keeping pace with the burgeoning American economy. Clothing items such as dress stays and underwear were among the goods manufactured and widely distributed. Retailing, likewise, expanded to serve the town and the Normal School.

The Ypsilanti Opera House on Congress Street and the Normal School's Conservatory of Music were both opened in the early 1880's, boosting the city's cultural status. The Opera House was considered the finest building in the city, built of polychrome brick in the Second Empire style. However, the building was destroyed by a tornado in 1893.

The accidental discovery of mineral water in Ypsilanti in 1882 brought another spurt in the city's economy. Seeking pure water for its factory, the Ypsilanti Paper Company drilled a well which produced water considered to have great medicinal value. Other wells were drilled nearly with the same results. Two sanitariums were built to capitalize on the discovery and the well water was sold throughout the nation. However, no buildings relating to the mineral springs remain.

In 1883, Ypsilanti's educational base was expanded with the founding of Cleary College. Begun as a school of penmanship, the school prospered as it capitalized on technology, offering courses in letigraphy, type-

writing and shorthand. The college erected a building for its use in 1887. For several years starting in 1915, the college was affiliated with the Normal School. Today, Cleary College is located in a newer building outside the study area, and is an independent business college.

The 1880's and 1890's were years of refinement, redevelopment and technological change in Ypsilanti. Telephone service was introduced in 1884; flagstone sidewalks were installed in 1886, electric lights in 1887. City water service was provided in 1889 when a pump station on the river and a water tower (listed on the National Register) across Cross Street from the Normal School were erected. Buildings considered to be landmarks, including the Water Tower, Starkweather Hall on the Normal School campus and the Starkweather Memorial Chapel in Highland Cemetery, and several fine commercial blocks along Michigan Avenue, were built during this period. Free mail delivery was implemented in 1889, and street car service to Ann Arbor was inaugurated in 1891. The line was electrified in 1898; and the "Ypsi-Ann" linked Ypsilanti with Detroit, Ann Arbor, Saline and Jackson by 1901.

Ypsilanti's park system had its beginnings in 1892 when a Park Improvement Society was established by several young women of the city. Prospect Park was the most immediate result when the bodies in the old cemetery on the site were moved to Highland Cemetery. Prospect Park came to be known for its flowers and pond. A dancing pavillion and band stand were provided. Gilbert Park on East Michigan Avenue was once the eastern Public Square. Recreation Park on Congress Street was for a long time

the fair grounds. Its major features were a fine oak grove, a swimming pool, a clubhouse and a gymnasium. Waterworks Park was well-liked for its riverside location and flower gardens. The area behind the Quirk House became a series of beautiful terraces leading to open play fields and river banks following its donation to the city in 1914 by Daniel L. Quirk. The Quirk property, Waterworks Park, and the immaculately maintained grounds of the Michigan Central depots (famous for elaborate floral designs), all contributed to the establishment of the river bottom area between Forest and Michigan Avenue as an area of natural beauty and recreational opportunity at a relatively early date in the city's history.

In 1913, the firm of noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead prepared a report which outlined proposed improvements leading to a General City Plan. This report, dated 31 December 1913, was 93 pages long and prefaced by the comment "city planning means keeping everlastingly at it along those lines, with an outlook as broad as the whole city and as far-reaching into the future as reason and sound judgement will carry."

The report was in two parts. The first part entitled The Main Problems and the Main Methods of Dealing with them. This part was broken into eight sections as follows:

- A. Steam railroads and industrial districts
- B. Electric Carlines and Main Thoroughfares
- C. The laying out of Secondary Streets and Local Subdivisions

- D. Detail of Street Design
- E. Public Parks and Playgrounds
- F. The River and its Shores
- G. Cemeteries
- H. Public Buildings and the Civic Life

Part two was entitled Specific Suggestions which listed the following 39 items:

1. Congress Street East
2. South Huron Street
3. Chicago Avenue and a portion of West Congress Street
4. Geddes Avenue
5. West Congress Street
6. North Huron Street
7. River Street
8. East Forest Avenue
9. East Cross Street
10. Prospect Street
11. Davis Street extension and reservation
12. Rawsonville Road and Belle Street extension
13. Proposed extensions of Harris and Race Streets
14. Proposed South Boulevard
15. Harriet Street widening and extension
16. Hamilton Street extension
17. Brower Street extension North and South
18. West Boulevard extension

19. Proposed Normal Valley Parkway
20. Proposed North Shore Parkway
21. First Avenue extension
22. North Shore Park
23. Frog Island and the adjacent river shores
24. Central River Park
25. East shore of the river between Cross and Congress Streets
26. River shores of Congress Street Bridge
27. The Barnard Meadows and the east bank of the river
28. Waterworks Park
29. South River Park
30. River Shores South of proposed South Boulevard
31. Highland cemetery
32. Prospect Park
33. Fifth Ward Park
34. Recreation Park
35. State Normal College
36. Water Tower
37. High School and proposed Manual Training School
38. Railway Station and yards
39. Proposed public and semi-public buildings along Huron
Street overlooking the river

Other involvements of the Olmstead office in Ypsilanti included specifications for ball field and playground and the suggestions for construction of a shelter building in Ypsilanti Recreation Park, 1908 to 1917.

There was a report prepared for City Hall Park, for Prospect Park, for River Park in back of the City Hall, for the Fifth Ward Park, on July 19th, 1916 which included planting lists and a pond designed for Prospect Park.

An interesting episode involving principles of urban design still debated today occurred in the late 1890's. For several years, large wooden awnings, which residents called sheds, had projected from building fronts to provide shade and protection from weather. Some in town felt they were old fashioned and unattractive. Editorials and letters in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti newspapers fueled the controversy. When the city council voted to remove the sheds, storekeepers choose to defy the order; so at midnight on November 3, 1899, a City-employed work crew demolished the sheds. Soon thereafter, merchants adopted canvas awnings to suit the same purpose.

The first decade of the 20th Century saw southeast Michigan in the midst of a remarkable industrial boom. The availability of large supplies of hardwood; economical shipping, via the Great Lakes, for transport of coal, iron ore and steel; and the coincidental proximity of a number of innovative, enterprising inventors and industrialists led to Detroit and Flint becoming centers of the rapidly growing automobile industry. For a time, however, Ypsilanti did not share in that growth except to become a bedroom community for workers in the nearby River Rouge complex of the Ford Motor Company (easily accessible by bus or interurban). The establishment of several small companies related to the auto industry

and the rapid expansion of the Normal School due to the state's increasing wealth kept the city from declining, however. At the university, several new departments were added, major new buildings constructed and enrollment was greatly increased during the period of 1910-1923. Efforts to promote the city were boosted when the Ypsilanti Board of Commerce was organized in 1920. Among its many activities was the building of the Huron Hotel to supplant the city's old hostelryes and provide a first-class hotel facility. Its construction was financed by selling shares to townspeople. The hotel opened on New Year's Day in 1923. The building was recently converted to office use, with a popular restaurant on the main floor, using the historic preservation tax incentives provided by the Tax Reform Act of 1976.

The city limped through the Depression buoyed by the continuing (though temporarily slowed) growth of the auto industry and the Normal School. In 1931, the Ford Motor Company purchased the old Cornwell Paper Mill on Factory Street to construct a parts plant. The plant began operations in 1932, employing several hundred employees. Except for a period during World War II when it produced defense parts, the plant has continuously produced auto parts, expanding from 63,000 square feet in 1932 to almost 1,000,000 square feet in 1982.

Henry Ford also purchased several hundred acres along a stream called Willow Run east of the city. The land was used as a farm/camp for sons of World War I veterans from 1939 to 1941. With the involvement of the

United States in World War II, the U.S. Government chose the Ford Motor Company, with its expertise in mass production and reputation for efficiency, to build a huge manufacturing complex to construct the B-24 "Liberator" bomber which became the workhorse of America's air forces. Construction of the Willow Run plant began in April of 1941, and the air field was completed in the following December.

While the factory was outside the city limits, it had a tremendous impact on Ypsilanti. The plant at one point employed 42,000 workers, many of whom moved to the Ypsilanti area from out of state. Others were provided with easy access from Detroit via the newly-constructed four-lane Willow Run Expressway. As the city had no excess housing stock (the college alone taxed the housing supply), government housing was built between the factory and the east city limits. The city's economy boomed as much as it could under war time restrictions. The new community of Willow Run was bigger in population than Ypsilanti by 1943.

At its peak, the Willow Run Bomber Plant produced one bomber every hour of every day. The three-quarter-mile long assembly line produced 8,685 B-24's by the end of the war. Even before the end, however, improvements in plant efficiency had reduced the work force to 16,000. By December of 1945, only 600 families remained in Willow Run. The area's housing quickly found new users, however, as returning war veterans and their families were housed in the "temporary" Willow Run Village dormitories and apartments, originally built to last no more than five years. Then, with G.I. Bill students increasing enrollment, the expanding student

ranks at the Normal College and at the nearby University of Michigan caused the excess Willow Run housing stock to be offered for student housing.

The Willow Run factory was converted to peace time use as an auto assembly plant by the Kaiser-Frazer Corporation in 1946. The company ceased operations in 1953 and, soon thereafter, General Motors purchased the complex. Since then, additional buildings have been built. Prior to recent recessions, the plant employed over 12,000 people.

Willow Run Airport was the major Detroit/Metropolitan area airport from the end of World War II to 1966, when a new facility designed for jet aircraft opened a few miles southeast of Willow Run. The old airport is now a center for private aircraft, air freight and University of Michigan research facilities.

The Willow Run Village housing was replaced by sprawling suburban development in the 1950's and 1960's, part of the suburban Detroit region that presses against Ypsilanti's eastern boundary.

The City of Ypsilanti's ties to Detroit were improved with the construction of Interstate 94 freeway (1959-61). This, along with the city's proximity to Ann Arbor, symbolize its relationships with the auto industry and with the educational establishment of the Ypsilanti-Ann Arbor area. Recent development has been subject to the cyclical nature of the auto industry; but the city has escaped the devastating effects of single-

industry dependence, such as that of Flint, by virtue of the importance of higher education. Until just recently, Eastern Michigan University (as Michigan's State Normal College was renamed in 1956), gave the city a relatively stable economy; but with the state's worsening financial situation, even the educational sector has begun to suffer. The development of Ypsilanti has hit another of the lulls characteristic of its history.

Today, the city, through its history, is simple to understand, and clearly reflects its development. The current land area is 2681.6 acres, while the population is about 24,000. The Michigan Avenue and Cross Street commercial areas remain the business centers, with the addition of several blocks of Cross Street west of the river which changed to business use after the 1900's to serve the needs of the Normal School students and faculty. Industry remains concentrated along the river/railroad corridor. Residential development from the earliest settlement to 1920 is for the most part contained within the study area boundaries. A second tier of home construction from the boom years of 1920-1940 can be discerned to the north and west of the Summit-Normal area, and to the east of the Eastern Village neighborhood. A third ring is to the south and west of Michigan Avenue and South Hamilton close to I-94, and to the north and south of the early residential neighborhood tied to the Depot Town commercial area, while the most recent development is to the west and north within and beyond the city limits. The campus has expanded in all directions except south (toward the city) from its original location.

The city still possesses a remarkable stock of historic houses, the basis for the National Register district established in 1977. The finest are along Huron, with several on River Street and some houses scattered on the fringe of the downtown and near the university. Depot Town, as the commercial area which grew up around the railroad station and served the Eastern Village, as now called, has benefitted tremendously from a continuing historic preservation/urban design/redevelopment effort. The same level of preservation activity has not been achieved by the Michigan Avenue commercial establishments, probably because of the extent of renovation of historic structures that occurred in the past; the fact that the Depot Town area had deteriorated further; and because of the obtrusive effects of Michigan Avenue, a wide, busy state and federal vehicular route.

The residential stock has benefitted from federal and local district designation and the efforts of the Historic District Commission, as well as city programs such as Block Grant housing rehabilitation loans and grants. Many of the great early and Victorian-era houses have been preserved or restored.

Individual preservation success stories are plentiful. The restoration and re-use of the Old City Hall, the Ypsilanti Historical Society's use of the Asa Dow House, the adaptive re-use of the Huron Hotel, the conversion of the Old Post Office to the Public Library, the various improvements and rehabilitations in Depot Town, the riverfront park development, the preservation of the Water Tower and Starkweather Hall on the E.M.U. campus, the Ladies Library Society house restoration and many individual

efforts all attest to the quality of Ypsilanti's building stock and the commitment of city and citizens.

There have been setbacks, such as the recent controversy surrounding the improvement of a Michigan Avenue commercial building which has resulted in the discussion concerning the removal of the Michigan Avenue area from the local historic district and the apparent indifference of the Eastern Michigan University Administration to the continuing deterioration of Welch Hall, one of the earliest remaining university buildings. However, these setbacks do not detract from the City's success in using historic preservation as a way to save and utilize its historic buildings, neighborhoods, and settings on a daily basis. The continuing preservation debate keeps these issues before the public. The debate and ongoing projects promise to set the tone for the next several years of Ypsilanti's history in the same way projects just described have helped define the past twenty years.

Sites of Significance in Black History

The Underground Railroad was neither underground nor a railroad, but did provide a method of escape for thousands of slaves on their way to Canada. Ypsilantians were heavily involved in operating way stations from the very beginning of this activity which increased after the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Though there were several rest stops at homes or in barns in or around Ypsilanti, the most noted locations were at the residence of Mark Norris on River Street, the Leonard Chase home on Cross Street, and the home of George McCoy, who lived in the Starkweather Place just off

Forest Avenue. A major route brought the escapees from Toledo to Blissfield, through Adrian, Clinton, Saline, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Romulus or Plymouth, to Detroit, for crossing into Canada.

George McCoy, a former slave from Kentucky, moved his family to Ypsilanti about 1854, where he lived on the Starkweather Farm. Here he engaged in the manufacture of cigars from tobacco which he raised and bought from his fellow farmers. An active participant in the Underground Railroad, he regularly transported escaped slaves to Detroit in concealed compartments of his wagon.

Elijah McCoy, son of a former slave, moved with his family to Ypsilanti when he was about ten years old. When he was about 16, his father sent him to Scotland where he was either apprenticed or schooled in engineering. Following his return to Ypsilanti about 1865, he went to work for the Michigan Central Railroad as a fireman. Later he worked for Edwards, McKinstry, & Van Cleve. McCoy's invention of an oil cup for use on railroad engines started him off on a series of inventions which brought him wide acclaim, particularly from the owners of the railroads. McCoy eventually moved to Detroit about 1882, but continued his activities in that line well into the 1920's producing more than 60 inventions.

John Hiram Fox, of Afro-American descent, grew up in Pittsfield Township, but lived with the Nathan Follett family while going to high school in Ypsilanti. Following his graduation from the University of Michigan, he practiced law and sold insurance from his office in Ypsilanti at the Hawkins House Hotel which still stands at the northeast corner of Huron and Congress. He died in June of 1886 at the age of 32.

Solomon Bow, an Afro-American, operated a grocery store at 52 South Washington, near Harriet, from the early 1870's until his death about 1887. His wife continued the business after his death. A son later entered the business of house moving which lasted well into the 20th century.

James Trust, an Afro-American, opened a barber shop on the corner of Washington and Michigan in 1840, becoming the first with that background to operate a business in Ypsilanti. His shop was the forerunner of a lucrative livelihood for other Afro-Americans well into the 20th century.

The Second Baptist Church was started by 11 persons of the Afro-American community who met at Adams Street School. They continued meeting there until 1864 when the old Presbyterian Church building on Pearson Street, between Adams and Hamilton Streets, was purchased. A third location was on the west side at 207 Babbitt Street. A fourth meeting place was on the "south side of Chicago (Michigan Avenue), between Normal and Ballard Streets. Moving to its present location about 1890, it has remained in that location. The present structure was completed in 1974.

Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church grew from informal meetings held in the homes of Syllus Jones and Florence Thompson, the latter a runaway slave, in 1843. In 1847, papers of incorporation for the African Methodist Episcopal Society were filed with the County Court in Ann Arbor. A minister was assigned in 1855, and the land on which the building now stands was donated by Jesse and Isa Stewart in 1858. The current building, the third, was completed in 1904.

Adams Street School developed from a desire to establish the neighborhood concept, and was first opened in 1860, under the leadership of John W. Hall, a cooper by trade. William Isaac Burdine came in 1864 and was the head teacher for several years. Accomodating the first four grades, a move to expand the school was defeated in the courts in 1919. It ceased operation as a school with the completion of the Harriet Street School (now Perry Child Development Center), in 1936.

C. Archaeological Significance

A review of archaeological literature for southeastern Michigan indicates that limited research has been conducted within the city and county. Research in the Ypsilanti area is marked by surveys dating from the first quarter of the twentieth century (Hinsdale 1927, 1931), amatuer research (Holly and Fouchey 1981) and one professional investigation (Shott 1980).

The major cultural/historical traditions identified for the eastern portion of North America can be listed as:

Paleo-Indian	13,000-7000 B.C.
Archaic	7000-1000 B.C.
Woodland	1000-A.D. 1700
Historic	post c. A.D.1650

Direct evidence for occupation of Ypsilanti during any of these periods is limited to the latter part of the Woodland and the Historic period

(Fitting 1970). Fitting (1965, 1970, 1978), Brose (1978), Callender, Pope and Pope (1978), and Tuck (1978) have all reported that the southeastern Michigan area was one of constantly shifting cultural affiliations and that a number of Indian groups are known to have occupied the area while on their way to the western lakes or from the lower to the upper Great Lakes. The groups known to have passed through the region include the Fox, Potawatomi (Clifton 1978), Kickapoo (Callender, Pope and Pope 1978) and Huron or "Huron-Like (Fitting 1970).

Review of the research of W.B. Hinsdale during the early part of this century reveals that the transient nature of these occupations is strongly supported. Hinsdale (1927) reports that no less than five Indian trails crossed the present location of the City of Ypsilanti. The most prominent of these was along the present day Michigan Avenue route. Other trails paralleled the Huron River on both banks, while some are traced by the present day Prospect and Cross-Packard Streets (Hinsdale 1927, Holly and Fouchey 1981). Hinsdale conducted a considerable amount of research in the state and is best known for the most impressive archaeological site in Washtenaw County, the mound which bears his name located on the campus of Concordia College. On the basis of the impressive artifacts recovered by Hinsdale from this mound, the site dates to the latter part of the Woodland period. Hinsdale also recorded several other sites within the Ypsilanti city limits.

Modern era scientific research into the archaeology of Ypsilanti is limited to that of Shott (1980) who conducted a preliminary survey into

the Riverside Park area for the City Community Development Department. Shott placed shovel tests in the park area and located one sealed 1890's trash dump.

The Michigan History Division maintains archaeological site files and maps all recorded sites on standard U.S. Geological Survey quadrangles. Recorded sites are identified by a national system which gives state (Michigan = 20), County (Washtenaw = WA) and sequence number (1, 2, 3, . . .). A review of Michigan History Division site files and maps resulted in the identification of eleven recorded sites. Approximate locations of these sites are shown on Map. Two sites, 20WA89 and 20WA124, not taken from Michigan History Division maps, have had their locations interpreted on the basis of all available data. No effort was made to locate or verify any of these sites, its existence or to search for any as yet unrecorded site within the corporate limits of the city.

Archaeological Potential

Based upon the review of previous research, relevant literature, examination of state site files and years of previous archaeological experience (Albers and Stinson 1981, Stinson and Wheaton 1982 and Stinson et al. 1980) an estimation of the prehistoric and historic archaeological potential has been made for the City of Ypsilanti. The result is indicated on map. No differentiation has been made between prehistoric and historic potential because the two often occur together and are of equal scientific value should there be a site at any particular location.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Within this area are numerous older homes and businesses which could have associated archaeological deposits dating to earlier historic or prehistoric occupations. Also included in this area are a number of early 19th century industrial and commercial developments [REDACTED] including flour and woolen mills (Colburn 1923). Shott (1980) and Stinson consider the potential for archaeological research to be high within the City of Ypsilanti. There appears to have been limited subsurface modification of the early Ypsilanti landscape. If this is the case, data of considerable importance to a better understanding of the development of Ypsilanti from settlement to frontier to an urban center could be sealed under the yards, streets and standing structures of today. That this is a possibility is demonstrated by the large amount of research recently conducted in the downtowns of major cities such as Washington, D.C.; New York and Philadelphia. Archaeologists involved in these projects have been surprised to discover that intact and well-preserved materials exist where one would have previously thought there would have been considerable disturbance caused by later construction.

In order to protect potentially valuable archaeological material from destruction, the city should continue with its program of professional survey investigations preceding construction. In the event that materials should be discovered during construction, the State Historic Preservation Office should be contacted immediately.

TABLE 1 Reference Map A

<u>Site No.</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Site Data</u>
20WA22	Prehistoric	Hinsdale reference-cemetery
20WA23	Prehistoric	Hinsdale reference-village
20WA24	Prehistoric	Hinsdale reference-village
20WA35	Prehistoric	campsite, no other data
20WA51	Prehistoric	amatuer collection, very large area which probably includes the locations of 20WA22 and 20WA35
20WA89	Prehistoric (?)	No exact location, artifacts at University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology
20WA122	Prehistoric Historic	Beakes and Colburn references-cemetery
20WA123	Historic	Trading post referenced by Beakes and Colburn, Godfroy-Pepin-Chambre I
20WA124	Historic	Beakes and Colburn references, Trading post Godfroy-Pepin Chambre II mis-mapped in state files
20WA136	Historic	1880's dump
20WA142	Prehistoric	no site data
Total Sites		11
Prehistoric Occupations		8
Historic Occupations		4

III. Review of Previous Surveys

Ypsilanti's wealth of fine historic architecture has been known to residents of the city and to those throughout the state for many years. As mentioned elsewhere, preservation activities have been underway in Ypsilanti for at least 70 years. It should come as no surprise, then, that the original Ypsilanti Historic District was one of the first and one of the largest (at the time) historic districts to be nominated and listed in Michigan. At the time, however, the requirements for district designation were not as rigorous or thorough as they are now. Thus, no building-by-building survey was undertaken or documented. Those who prepared the nomination knew the area well; and a list of those buildings that should be included were easy to formulate. That list, and photographs of most (or all) of those buildings, plus the nomination form, is all the formal documentation of the district that exists. No survey forms or cards (with photos and slides), no list of owners or of contributing versus non-contributing buildings, and no substantial statements of architectural or historical significance of the district as a whole were written. When several blocks were added to the district some time later, the same lack of documentation was in evidence. Thus, the survey documented in this report is the first complete survey of Ypsilanti undertaken.

IV. Survey Methodology

The project commenced with a windshield survey of the entire city of Ypsilanti to delineate the boundaries of the general study area within which all buildings and structures would be inventoried on Michigan

History Division cards. This survey was carried out by the consultant team, with the addition of Richard Wood of the City Planning Department, and Robert O. Christensen of the Michigan History Division. Based on this survey, preliminary district boundaries were established and the area to be inventoried in detail was designated.

Several Eastern Michigan University graduate preservation program students, all trained in survey techniques and photography, carried out the field work, using Michigan History Division guidelines and consultant-designed inventory forms to document all the structures in the inventory area. The field information, photos and other data were transferred to Michigan History Division inventory cards. The locations of all recorded properties were mapped. Once inventory forms and cards were completed, the consultant team evaluated every structure using National Register and History Division criteria and 105-point scoring system to refine district boundaries and to determine landmark structures and pivotal buildings. A review session with the Historic District Commission was held to discuss the proposed individual sites and districts, and a further refinement of the boundaries took place. The final list of individual sites and the final district boundaries were determined as a result of a meeting of the consultant team and Robert Christensen of the History Division in February, 1983. This nomination, along with the publication of a final survey/planning report describing the project, the resources, and the potential uses of the information collected, represents the end product of the project.

The survey undertaken represents an assessment of all historic and architectural resources that are at least fifty years old at the present date. While there clearly is more research that could be done in these two categories, the basic work has been completed to the level of detail required. Further archaeological research and field work should be considered, as outlined in the archaeological summary presented later in this nomination. There should, furthermore, be a continuing effort to update the survey documentation in light of changing trends and the passage of time. At least one area of the city, that to the west of the proposed new district boundary and to the south of the university, has a definite character and consistent architecture. It was excluded only because of the relative newness of much of its architecture: most of the residences in the area were built in the late 1930's or early 1940's. While not meeting today's criteria, in a few years the neighborhood may very well qualify as a district. So while the survey and nomination project may be thorough and complete as of 1983, in a few years more information will be required and expansion of the district boundary may be a real possibility and/or necessity.

V. Analysis of Problems

The project team was carefully assembled for the Ypsilanti survey project. The four principals were all very familiar with the city and surrounding area and the city's buildings. The field surveyors were all students at Eastern Michigan University, and most lived in Ypsilanti. Thus, the logistics of the survey were easy to work out. Familiarity with the resources being surveyed allowed the principals to research

and evaluate easily and thoroughly. The city administration had long advocated historic preservation as a planning, development and redevelopment tool. As a result, the relationship between the consultants and the city was always positive and mutually beneficial. The same can be said for the relationship between the consultants and the Michigan History Division, Department of State. The level of cooperation and mutual assistance during all phases of the survey and nomination preparation assured a smoothly-functioning project.

There were no significant problems in defining or carrying out the work. The only problem throughout the project was one of time, or the lack of it. Certain elements of the survey work, in particular, took longer than expected. Specifically, processing of project photographs took more time than the consultants allowed for; and this resulted in delays further down the line. These delays resulted in a shortened schedule for review and comment on the draft nomination and report. However, with the cooperation of the City of Ypsilanti and the Michigan Department of State, the final schedule was adjusted to allow sufficient time to produce survey documentation, nomination and report of the expected and desired quality.

VI. List of Sites

A. DISTRICTS AND STRUCTURES IN YPSILANTI CURRENTLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Ypsilanti Historic District

Ladies' Literary Club Building (William M. Davis House)
218 North Washington

Starkweather Religious Center
901 Forest (Eastern Michigan University campus)

Ypsilanti Water Works Standpipe
Summit and Cross Streets

Brinkerhoff - Becker House
Forest at Perrin Streets

B. DISTRICTS & STRUCTURES NOMINATED TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER AS A RESULT OF THIS SURVEY

Ypsilanti Historic District Enlargement

Eastern Michigan University Historic District

Highland Cemetery Historic District

Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (39:24)
401 S. Adams

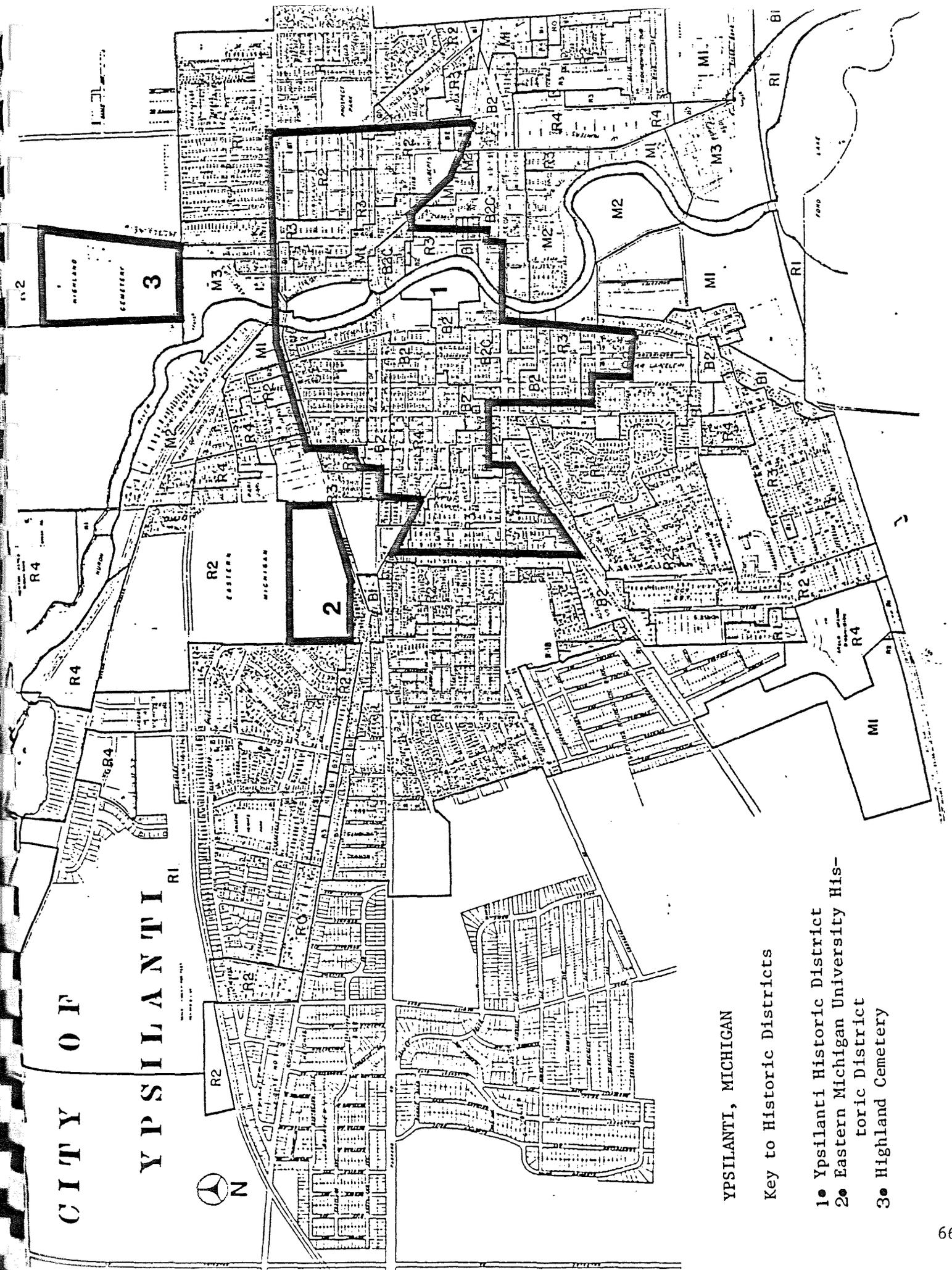
First Ward/Adams School (39:16)
407 S. Adams

Abelson House (15:15)
304 Jarvis

Sherzer House (37:23)
935 Pearl

CITY OF

YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN



YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

Key to Historic Districts

- 1● Ypsilanti Historic District
- 2● Eastern Michigan University Historic District
- 3● Highland Cemetery

VII. Nominated Resources

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Three districts were nominated because of associative history, landscape architecture and/or architectural importance. In the first case, the criteria for district designation were the significance of persons; firms; or religious, governmental or civic institutions associated with the proposed districts or with buildings within district boundaries. Architectural significance was established by defining the importance of district structures together and individually to the architectural history of Ypsilanti. Similar criteria were used to establish the significance of a site's importance to landscape architecture in the city. Under the heading of architectural history, National Register criteria were utilized to establish boundaries and pivotal buildings: landmark buildings, fine local examples of specific architectural styles or building types, or important works of significant architects or builders.

YPSILANTI HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Ypsilanti Historic District is comprised of approximately sixty-seven city blocks in two district concentrations on either side of the Huron River, which runs north-south between the two portions. Because of the change in topography and the absence of buildings, the river valley creates an open space separation between the two areas. Three bridges connect the two sides of the river within the district boundaries: those on Forest and Michigan Avenue being respectively on the north and south boundaries, and that on Cross Street in the middle.

Although the greatest concentration of pivotal buildings is located on Huron Street (on the west side of the river) the stylistic range is distributed generally consistently throughout the district on both sides of the river. The predominant character of the district is its nineteenth-century buildings. Although early twentieth-century structures exist inside the boundaries, it is in the adjoining neighborhoods outside the historic district where the predominant character is of a later vintage. On the east side is what originally developed as a separate community known as Woodruff's Grove. Its commercial center was E. Cross Street at River Street, now known as Depot Town. This commercial development was the result of the location of the railroad along the Huron River valley, in this portion on the east side of the river. Today it is a secondary business district in Ypsilanti. The east side consists of approximately seventeen blocks in all. Stylistically they range from the Greek Revival development period through the Bungalow period. Although there are exceptions (two spectacular ones at that - the Gilbert and Hutchinson Houses), the east side generally developed as a working man's neighborhood with more modest homes. The larger west side portion of the historic district consists of approximately fifty blocks of buildings, fanning out from Ypsilanti's primary downtown business district located on Michigan Avenue just west of the river. A majority of the eight square block commercial center is included in the district. From this center, residential neighborhoods extend to the west, north and south. Like the east portion across the Huron River, these neighborhoods include buildings ranging from the earliest Greek Revival period through the early twentieth-century. The northwest edge of this portion of the district is bounded by Eastern Michigan University.

The Ypsilanti Historic District is significant in that it contains virtually all of the historic architecture in the city. The district reflects the broad spectrum of social, political and economic history that has created Ypsilanti as it is known today. Ypsilanti is one of Michigan's oldest communities, tracing its beginnings to 1823, when settlement began at the point where the trail from Detroit to Chicago crossed the Huron River. Early growth reflected its strategic siting and Ypsilanti became the commercial hub of a surrounding agricultural hinterland. A milling industry developed to take advantage of power provided by the Huron River. Ypsilanti became an early educational center as the home of the Michigan State Normal College said to be the first such institution west of the Appalachians. Industry continued to grow and diversify; Ypsilanti developed a reputation for its paper mills. Just prior to and during World War II, massive development of the Willow Run B-24 bomber plant put Ypsilanti on the national map. At its peak, the plant produced one plane every hour of every day. Like many communities, Ypsilanti experienced enormous growth after World War II in the 1950's and 60's. Yet Ypsilanti retains a well-preserved heritage of nineteenth century buildings.

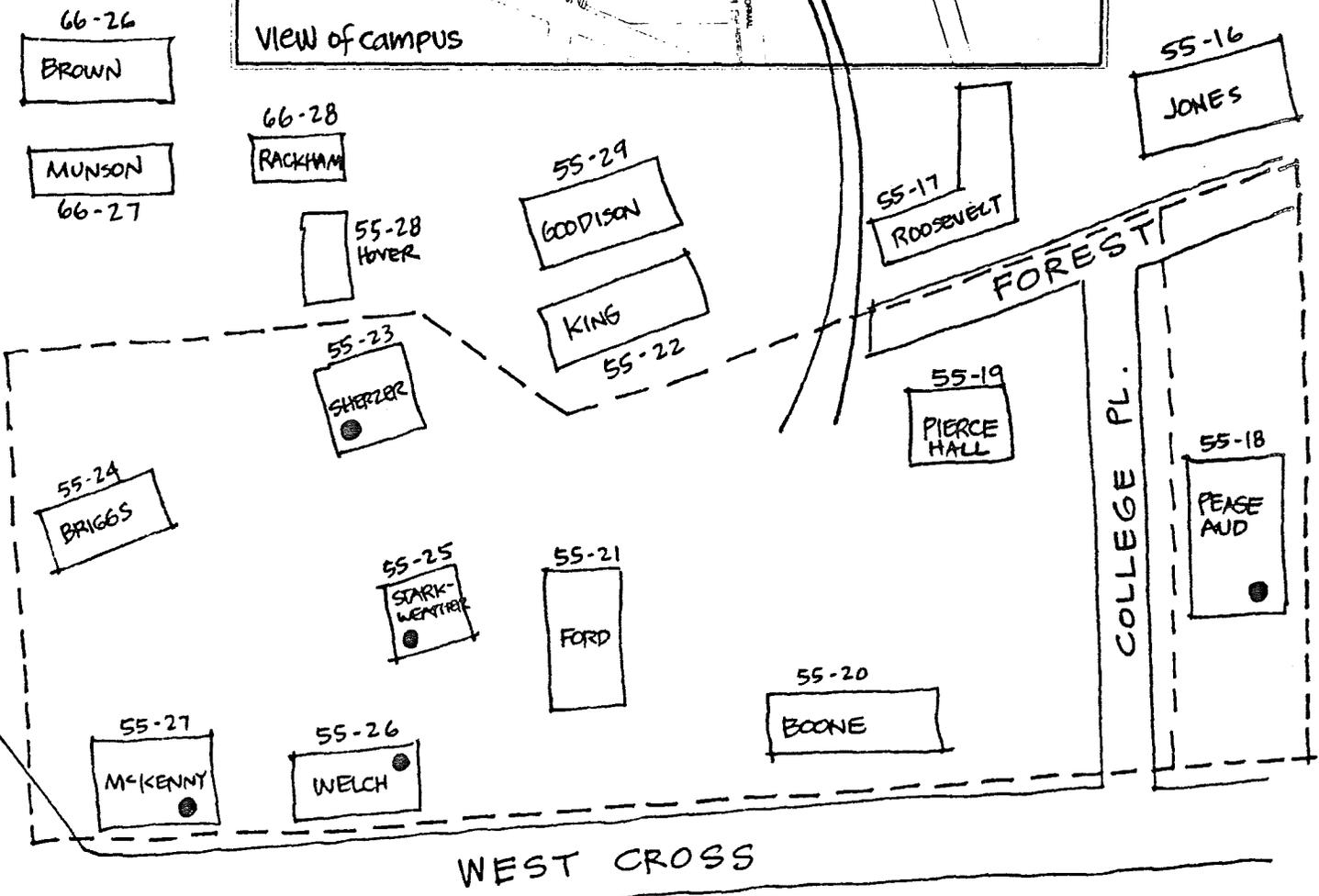
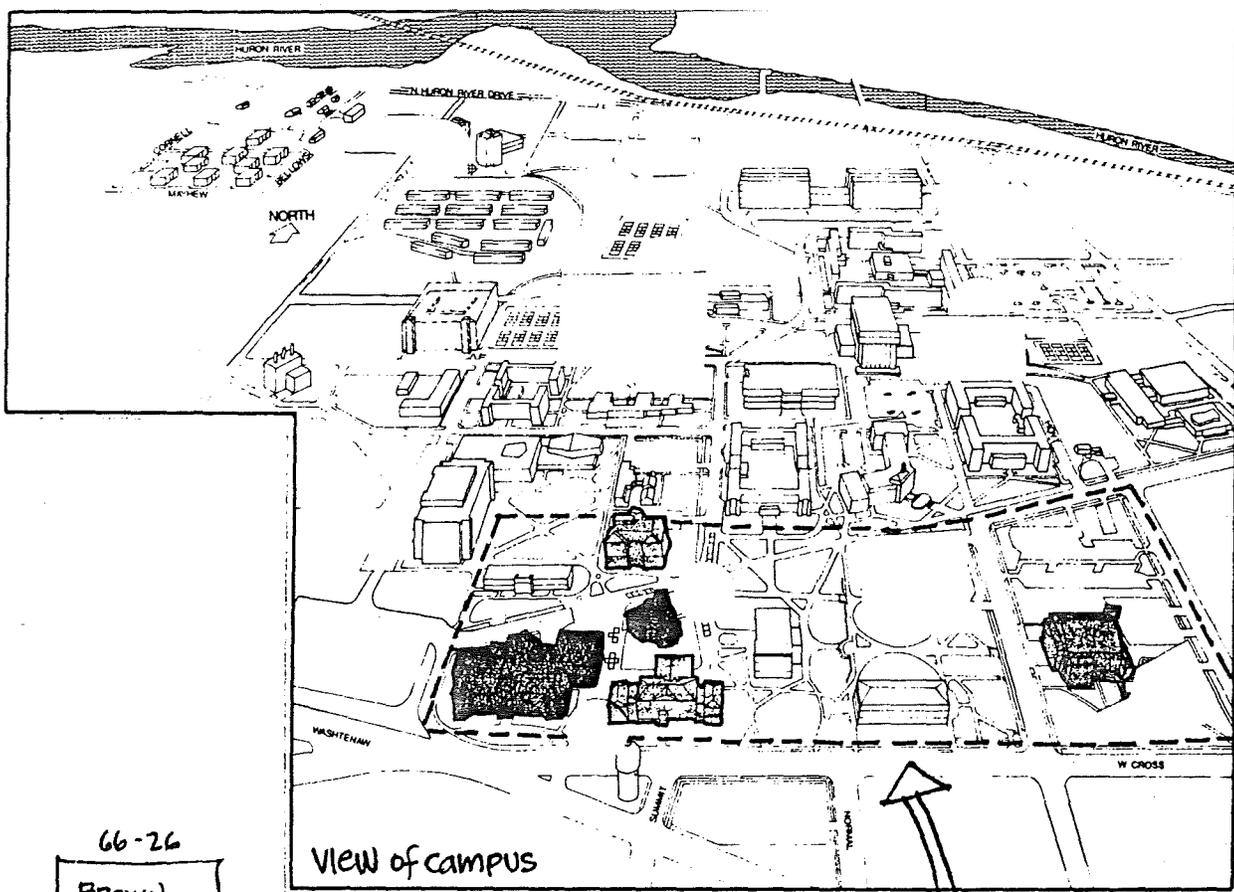
The architecture which reflects this history is a diverse representation of residential, commercial and industrial buildings built in a wide range of styles reflecting Classic Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, Colonial Revival, Beaux Arts, Craftsman, and Bungalow styles.

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Eastern Michigan University Historic District is a discontinuous, two-part district containing five of the oldest and most historically and architecturally significant Eastern Michigan University buildings. Four of the structures are grouped together on the south edge of the campus near the intersection of W. Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue. These are Welch Hall, 1896 (55:26), Starkweather Hall, 1897 (55:25), Sherzer Hall, 1902 (55:23) and McKenny Hall, 1931 (55:27). The fifth building, Pease Auditorium, 1915 (55:18), is located one block east of this group on the east side of College Place.

Forest Avenue, which originally separated Sherzer Hall from the group, has been vacated and is now a major east-west pedestrian corridor through campus.

As a group, the four are visually related to each other, with Starkweather in the middle. Probably the most visually prominent of the five is McKenny Hall, located on the acute angle intersection formed by Washtenaw Avenue and the vacated Forest Avenue. Eastbound vehicular traffic into Ypsilanti is very aware of McKenny because of this strategic location. Welch Hall is also in a visually prominent location; it forms the focal point of the view north on Normal Street, which dead-ends in front of Welch. This building also has a strong visual relationship with the nearby Ypsilanti Water Tower (a National Register listed structure) which is just south across Cross Street from Welch.



● = CONTRIBUTING

DISTRICT MAP

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

NORTH ↑

These buildings consist of two nineteenth and three twentieth-century buildings, together the oldest remaining structures on campus. Architecturally they represent a range of styles from Queen Anne (Starkweather and Sherzer), to Renaissance Revival (Welch), Neo-classical Revival (Pease), and Collegiate Gothic (McKenny). All are constructed of masonry, primarily brick, but also of terra cotta, cut limestone, sandstone and fieldstone.

The Michigan State Normal School was established by the state legislature in 1849; thus Michigan became the third state to found an institution exclusively for the training of teachers (Massachusetts and New York being the previous two). Implementation of the "normal school" concept was largely the result of the efforts of the Rev. John D. Pierce, Michigan's first Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Isaac E. Crary, a Marshall lawyer instrumental in establishing the state system of free education.

The system was modeled after that established in Berlin in 1748, by Johann Julius Hecker. The first school in the U.S. for training teachers was a private school founded at Concord, New Hampshire in 1823 by the Rev. S.R. Hall. Massachusetts established the first state supported normal school at Lexington in 1839, through the efforts of Horace Mann, Secretary of the State Board of Education and a pioneer American educator. The bill providing for the Michigan State Normal School was signed into law by the governor on March 25, 1850. It appropriated 25 sections of land for the support of the school; the Board of Education entertained

bids from Michigan towns for the location of the school. As Ypsilanti offered the most lucrative circumstances (a \$13,500 cash subscription toward erection of the first building, temporary rooms for the use of the school, and payment of the principal's salary for five years), the school was located there. Adonijah S. Welch, a lawyer and Jonesville educator, was named the first principal. The first building opened in October 1852, and the first class (consisting of three students) graduated in 1854.

During the formative years between 1852 and 1865, the Normal School's pioneering role in education expanded. A significant debate evolved over the institution's curriculum, as courses were developed which were not specifically oriented to the training of teachers. The issue was fueled by the fact that many Normal graduates did not enter the teaching profession after graduation. The school insisted, however, that a liberal arts education was essential in the development of the professional teacher. This concept is one of the school's most important legacies to the teaching profession.

In 1897, it became the second normal school in the country to adopt a four-year college-grade curriculum, the first being that at Albany, New York, in 1890. In 1899, the name was changed from Normal School to Michigan State Normal College. In the period just after the turn of the century, the college experienced a rapid increase in enrollment, further expansion of the curriculum, and a corresponding enlargement of the physical facilities. In 1956, as a result of the development of regional

teachers colleges in the state, the Normal College became Eastern Michigan College. And then in 1959, the name changed again, to the present Eastern Michigan University, comprised of three colleges: Arts and Sciences, Education, and the Graduate School. The College of Business was created in 1964.

In the course of its history, Eastern Michigan University has achieved many firsts, to instill great significance to it in the field of education:

1. the first normal school west of the Appalachians,
2. the first institution of higher learning in Michigan to receive support from the legislature (1850),
3. the first tax supported college in Michigan to open its doors to men and women alike,
4. the first in the West to establish a department to train teachers in physical education (1888),
5. the first in Michigan to establish a department of geography (1890),
6. the first teacher's college in the U.S. to have a building for religious activities (Starkweather Hall, 1897),
7. the first college in Michigan to offer courses in industrial arts (1901),
8. the first state teacher's college in the U.S. to establish training for teachers of handicapped children (1915), and
9. the first teacher's college in the U.S. to have a social center building (Charles McKenny Hall, 1931).

The physical manifestations of Eastern Michigan University's significant educational history remain today in the form of its oldest buildings.

Unfortunately, all of the earliest structures no longer exist. The first building constructed in 1852, was destroyed by fire in 1859. It

was located approximately between present-day Welch, Starkweather and Ford Halls. The oldest remaining building is Welch Hall (1896); it is the only building which represents the original purpose of the Normal School - the training of teachers. It was constructed to house the practice teaching activities of the school, and is where evolving theories of teaching were developed and demonstrated. Certainly other buildings have served, and continue to serve, the College of Education, but Welch Hall is the single remaining legacy of the early Normal School's educational mandate. Starkweather Hall (1897) is significant for its early role in campus social and religious life. As the first building at a U.S. teacher's college built for religious activities, it reflects the strong role which religious concerns played in the Normal School. Sherzer Hall (1902) is important for its commitment of the College to the study of the sciences. Dr. William H. Sherzer, head of the Department of Natural Sciences for forty years, was a noted geologist of his time, and was instrumental in the design of the building based on European models of the day. It is unfortunate indeed, that only two nineteenth century buildings remain today (and both very late nineteenth century), on a campus founded in 1852.

Welch represents a product of the well-known Detroit architectural firm of Malcomson & Higginbotham. The office designed numerous Detroit schools, including Northern High School in 1917. Sherzer, although similar, is less stylistically conscious of Renaissance Revival detailing. It was built as the Science Building and reflects this in its more

utilitarian manner, by an absence of decoration and a function-oriented response to program requirements (i.e., the observatory). Starkweather Hall is a fine example of the American Queen Anne style, as adapted from the work of England's well-known late nineteenth-century architect, Richard Norman Shaw. It is the most domestic of the buildings on the EMU campus; its strategic location on a major pedestrian walkway and its singular character, give it great visibility and recognition.

HIGHLAND CEMETERY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Highland Cemetery is a forty-acre rural burial ground located on the side and crest of the bluff overlooking the Huron River to the north of central Ypsilanti. The grounds, through which the narrow, gravel roadways wind in circular fashion, are hilly and extensively wooded with groves of oak, maple, cedar, and pine. The cemetery buildings include the sexton's lodge, a frame, Swiss-style cottage, the Richardsonian Romanesque Starkweather Memorial Chapel, and early twentieth-century receiving vault and public mausoleum structures. The grounds contain a profusion of nineteenth- and twentieth-century memorials.

The rectangular cemetery grounds are entered on their east side from North River Street through a simple gateway consisting of a set of larger and smaller piers of random ashlar masonry on either side, with wrought iron gates and fencing of mildly Chinese design (the gates were donated by Lois V. Leetch in 1912). From the gate, the roadway divides into two sections, separated by a narrow, grassy median, and, flanked by rows of old maples, runs uphill a short distance to the Starkweather

Memorial Chapel. From the circle which surrounds the chapel, narrow, gravel roadways radiate out in all directions and wind in curvilinear fashion through the grounds, along the top and upper slopes of the bluff. The cemetery grounds contain the following structures:

Sexton's Lodge/Office, 1880 (75:27), located near the street just to the north of the entrance gate. This modest, though very handsomely detailed, frame, Swiss or "Stick Style" structure consists of two parts: the L-shaped, one-and-one-half-story lodge and, attached to its rear as a wing, the small, one-story office. Originally two distinct structures sited flanking the cemetery gate on either side, the structures were moved to the present site and combined into a single building about 1954. The house has an arcade-like, timber porch on its south side. Its exterior is sheathed in vertical boarding in the lower floor and, in the gables, in round-butt shingling in panels formed by the "Stick Style" timbering. There is a band of panels of diagonal and vertical boarding below the second-floor gable windows. The office has vertical-board walls and a shingled gable with "Stick Style" gable timbering. Behind the house and office is a small, board-and-batten-siding barn.

Starkweather Memorial Chapel, 1888-1889 (75:26), a small, square, one-story hip-roof structure with a square, two-story, hip-roof, rear tower. Richardsonian Romanesque in style, the building is constructed of varicolored stone laid up in random ashlar fashion trimmed with red sandstone colonnettes, frieze, gable copings and finials, window jamb facings, and sill and lintel courses. The east-facing front contains

entrance portal, fitted with wrought iron gates and paneled metal doors. The north and south sides each have an arched window in the center, capped by a gable rising up above the main cornice. The chapel contains four documented Tiffany windows. These were dedicated by Mary Starkweather to four individuals important to her: Rhoda Phelps Newberry (her mother), John Stoughton Newberry (her youngest brother), Rev. John D. Pierce (pioneer Congregational minister and educator), and Rev. Ira Wead (pioneer Presbyterian minister in Ypsilanti).

The Starkweather Memorial Chapel is significant architecturally as an outstanding example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture in Ypsilanti. It was constructed in 1888, and dedicated the next year by Mary Starkweather as a memorial to her husband, John. The chapel is for the use of anyone who has acquired the right of burial in Highland Cemetery. The building was constructed by E. C. Warner and Mr. Walker, the latter of Ann Arbor, for a cost of \$7,555.

Mary Ann Theresa Starkweather was the daughter of Elihu Newberry and heir to the Chicago Newberry fortune. In 1886, as a niece of Walter Loomis Newberry, she received a substantial inheritance. In the remaining eleven years of her life she made several bequests, one of which was the chapel. Mary Starkweather was a member of the Society of the Descendants of the Mayflower, being a descendant of Gov. Bradford of Plymouth Colony.

Receiving Vault, 1906 (:), a rectangular, flat-roof, sandstone-block structure with a projecting, gable-roof portal, located a short distance northeast of Starkweather Chapel and facing toward it. Built into the side of a low rise, the vault is Gothic in style. Its entrance has florid wrought iron gates and Gothic-panel, metal doors. The structure was donated by O. L. Quirk.

Public Mausoleum, 1925 (:), a broad-fronted, rectangular, Classical Revival structure of limestone. Located at the south end of the large cemetery near the street, the structure faces northward on a large, open, grassy oval.

Modern "garrison colonial" house, located just to the north of the sexton's lodge. It is almost hidden from view from the cemetery and street.

The cemetery contains monuments dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. The earlier and more elaborate monuments are found along the edge of the bluff and in the area near Starkweather Chapel and the entrance boulevard. The memorials include several white, stone-slab headstones which, dating from the 1840's and 1850's, were evidently moved here following the abandonment of earlier cemeteries; Gothic and Romanesque tablets; Late Victorian, cast-stone, rustic tree trunks or vermiculated-surface markers; a zinc monument; obelisks and pedestals; and early twentieth-century, classical, canopy or sarcophagus monuments.

The most visually prominent memorials are the Civil War Memorial of 1895, with its figure of a Union soldier, standing at the south end of the cemetery on the bluff overlooking Ypsilanti, and standing near each other to the northwest of the Starkweather Chapel, the rock-face, stone Brayton Mausoleum, the 1901, Ionic-column, Uhl canopy marker, and the granite, pillar-like Elijah Grant monument, crowned by a bronze mourning figure.

Highland Cemetery is notable for its picturesque topography, for the large, old trees with which its grounds are embowered, and for its carefully conceived system of artfully winding roadways which create an endless series of pleasant nooks and vistas within the cemetery grounds and provide extensive views of Ypsilanti from the bluff along the cemetery's west and southwest edges. Highland Cemetery possesses additional importance because of the particularly handsome cemetery buildings with which its grounds are dotted and the high quality and broad range of its nineteenth- and early twentieth-century funerary art.

Highland Cemetery was established in 1864 and dedicated on July 14 of that year. The grounds were laid out by Col. James L. Glenn, a landscape gardener, surveyor, and builder from Niles, Michigan, who had laid out Ann Arbor's Forest Hill Cemetery in 1859. In the next few years plantings of pine, cedar, and other trees were made to complement the existing groves of oaks and maples and the rows of maples which flank the entrance boulevard were set in place.

Highland is notable as a rare Michigan example of the rural cemetery genre. Elmwood Cemetery in Detroit, probably Michigan's first such burial ground, was established in 1846. Only a few other rural cemeteries -- including Mountain Home Cemetery in Kalamazoo (1850) and Forest Hill Cemetery in Ann Arbor (1859) were established before Highland. Highland's sexton's lodge and the Starkweather Chapel are both notable in architectural terms -- the former for its Swiss-inspired "Stick Style" design and the latter for its handsome Richardsonian Romanesque design and detailing and for its four Tiffany memorial windows. The cemetery's memorials typify mainstream American funerary art of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A broad range of styles and types of memorials are present, along with a few monuments of particular quality.

INTRODUCTION TO INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Four individual Ypsilanti properties were nominated because of the significance of persons, firms or institutions associated with them or because of the architectural significance of the structures as landmark buildings or excellent examples of architectural styles or building types. Some of the individual properties meet the criteria on both counts.

BROWN CHAPEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (39:24) 401 S. Adams

Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church is a cross-shaped, Gothic structure of red brick, standing on a high, ramped-wall, vari-colored, stone basement. Standing at the southeast corner of Adams and Buffalo streets, the

church faces west on Adams and has gabled "transepts" on its north and south flanks. A pyramid-roof tower marks the Adams-Buffalo-intersection corner of the building. Modern brick and cinderblock extensions fill out the church's rear (east) corners.

Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church is a significant site associated with Ypsilanti's Black history, and has long been a center of the Black community.

The A.M.E. congregation in Ypsilanti was organized in 1847 by Sylus Jones and Florence Thompson, the latter an escaped slave. By 1855 it was designated a mission by the Indiana conference, and a year later the Rev. Augustus R. Green arrived. A frame building was built in 1870, on land donated by Jesse and Isa Stewart in 1858. The present building, the third on the site, replaced it when construction was begun with the laying of a cornerstone in 1901. It was completed in 1904, emerging from the hands of the members, including the Rev. Lewis Pettiford, who came to the congregation in 1897. He was one of the motivating forces behind its construction. Another was Mrs. Wealtha Sherman, who solicited materials and donations from businesses. The church was built as she obtained materials, even carrying them through the streets herself in a wheelbarrow. The chapel was named for Bishop Morris Brown, the second presiding bishop of the A.M.E. branch of Methodism, officially established in Philadelphia in 1816. In 1913 Brown Chapel hosted the A.M.E. Michigan Annual Conference. In 1913 Gov. G. Mennen Williams spoke at the celebration of the church's 100 year anniversary.

FIRST WARD/ADAMS SCHOOL (39-16)
407 S. Adams

The First Ward School is a high-roof, end-gable, Late Victorian design in brick with segmental-arch window openings and a wooden belfry. The west front elevation has key stones in the arches. Parallel horizontal brick bands, slightly projecting, encircle the building at door lintel level. The building was constructed in 1864.

The First Ward School is significant because of the role it has played in Ypsilanti's past, being associated with the Black history of the community. The first ward school served as the major school for Ypsilanti's Black community from its opening in 1860 until the 1920's, when the Harriet Street School was completed. John W. Hall, a copper by trade, was the organizer of the school. The Rev. William Isaac Burdine, teacher-principal, presided over the school beginning in 1864; he is said to have been the first Black principal in Michigan. Mrs. Loretta A. Pitkin was the first teacher. Since the opening of the Harriet Street School, it has served as the home of various church groups, presently being occupied by the New Jerusalem Baptist Church.

JOHN E. ABELSON HOUSE (15:15)
304 Jarvis

The Abelson House is a one-and-one-half-story Bungalow-style residence, constructed entirely of cobblestones on the exterior. It is a flank-gable-roof house with a large shed dormer facing the street. A porch, almost the full width of the house, projects from the front and is

roofed by a gable with ridge perpendicular to that of the main structure; it is supported by round columns, also built of cobbelstone masonry. A chimney projects from the west side of the house. In typical Bungalow fashion, the roof has wide overhangs and exposed rafter ends. Round cobblestone piers are also used to demarcate the corners of the lot.

The Abelson House is significant architecturally as the only house constructed completely of cobblestones in the city of Ypsilanti. It was built by John E. and Ella J. Abelson. He was a well-known gardener in Ypsilanti.

WILLIAM H. SHERZER HOUSE (37:23)
935 Pearl

The Sherzer House is a one-story Bungalow-style design, whose most distinctive feature is the convex curved roof at the overhanging eaves. It has a U-shaped form open to the north front side. One leg is a bedroom, while the other is the entry. The low horizontality of the house is emphasized by the wide overhangs and the use of two wall materials - a brick base, above which is a stucco band containing the window openings. The hip roof features an eye-brow dormer centered over the recessed portion of the "U" plan. According to city historian, Foster Fletcher, the original hollow silo block foundation had to be replaced due to deterioration. The house was constructed in 1922.

The Sherzer House is significant as an excellent example of the Bungalow style, and as the residence of a noted Normal College professor and department head. The William H. Sherzer residence was built in 1922 by

contractor Morris Lathers, on property purchased by Sherzer in 1914. He previously lived at 9 N. Summit for approximately 20 years. Sherzer was head of the Department of Natural Science at Michigan State Normal School (now EMU) for over 30 years until his death in 1932. He was born in 1860, received a B.S. degree at U of M in 1889, an M.S. in 1890, and a Ph.D. from U of M in 1901 after a year of study at the University of Berlin. Sherzer was a practicing geologist and participated in several surveys and expeditions, notably the Smithsonian Glacial Expedition to the Canadian Rockies. He was the author of several books on geology and nature study. In 1895 he served as president of the Michigan Academy of Sciences. EMU's Sherzer Hall is named for him. The 1924 City Directory lists fellow faculty member Herbert T. Olander as residing at 935 Pearl also.

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