



Figure 3.2.1-29. Detroit Copper and Brass Rolling Mills Complex

Source: Sanborn Map Company 1921 Revised 1944

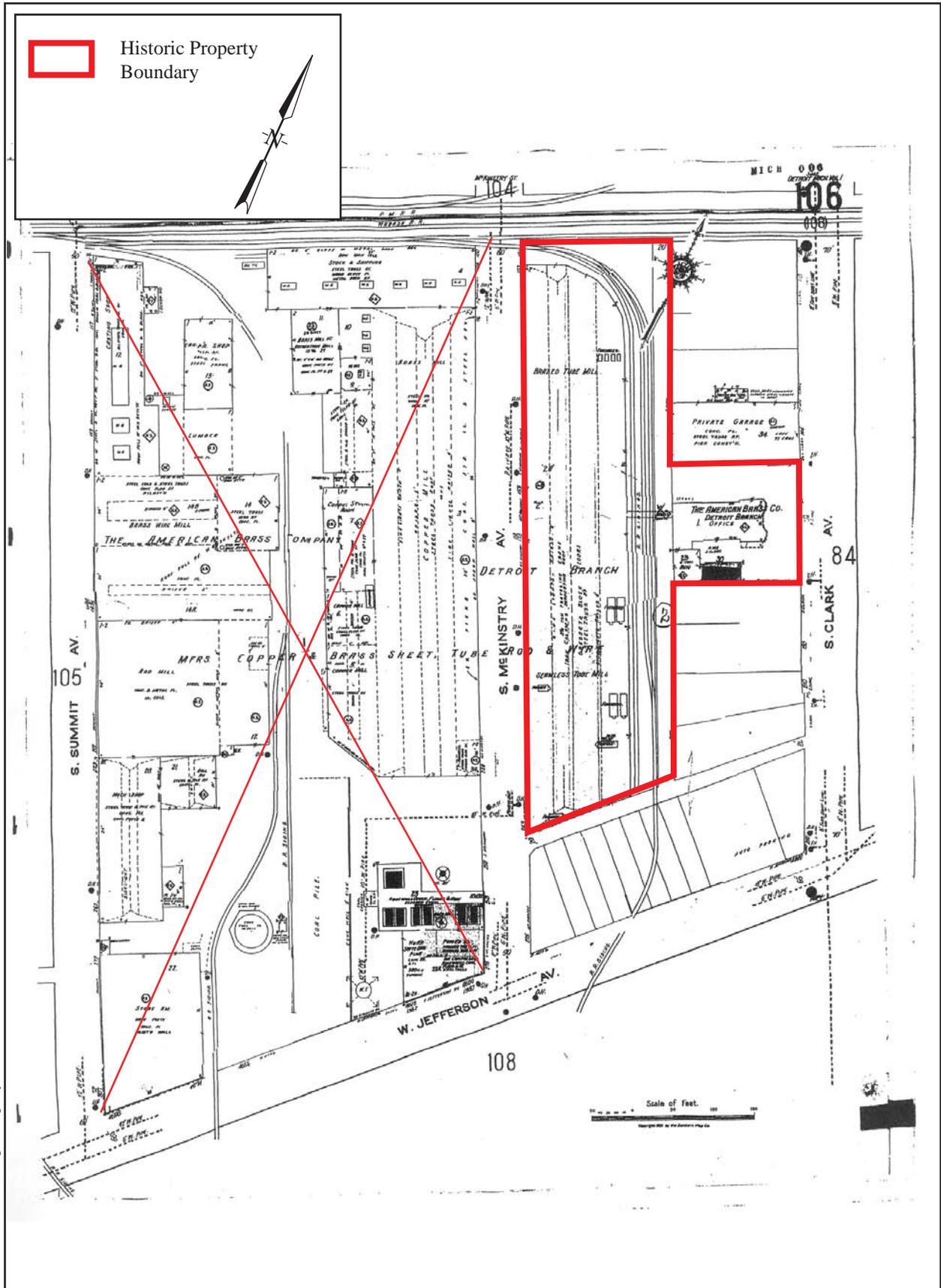


Figure 3.2.1-30. Detroit Copper and Brass Rolling Mills Complex, 1944

The office reflects the Georgian Revival style, a popular commercial and residential design of the early twentieth century. It was popularly used for small-scale commercial office buildings of the period (Gordon 1992:101). The office stands two-stories with a raised basement and is constructed of brick laid in a running bond pattern. The building is capped with a flat roof and rests on a concrete base. The denticulated modillion cornice and splayed lintels with keystones are elements of the Georgian Revival style. It appears that the original windows have been replaced. The only other significant alteration appears to be the construction of a small one-story addition appended to the south elevation of the office building. A second small addition extends from the west elevation of the first addition.

### History

The Detroit Copper and Brass Rolling Mills Corporation actually began manufacturing in 1881 at a works located on the corner of Larned and Fourth Streets. In 1888 the company moved to the present location on the west side of McKinstry Avenue, between the Wabash Railway and Jefferson Avenue. At this time, or shortly thereafter, the present monitor-roof building was constructed, in addition to others that have since been demolished. As of 1890, the firm had the largest and most complete copper rolling machinery in the country and could roll larger sheets than any other mill in the United States. The plant made sheet copper, brass, bronze and German silver and copper and brass rods, rivets and wires of all kinds, as well as copper bottoms for all sorts of utensils. They shipped goods west as far as San Francisco, east to New York, Boston and Montreal, and south to New Orleans and other points (Farmer 1890). Owners of the Detroit Copper and Brass Rolling Mills erected the Georgian-style office building in 1906 (Ashley 2005).

The original owner of the company was Christian Buhl. Buhl, through his career, had been an alderman, city mayor, police commissioner, and banker. He was the first president of the company, which was incorporated in 1881. For many years the company was the largest fabricator of copper and brass in Michigan, and it was the primary provider of exterior ornamentation and brass engine parts for the Ford Motor Car Company. Detroit Copper and Brass played a major role in helping building Detroit's reputation as "the city that put America on wheels." According to Holleman and Gallagher (1978:208, 211), the architect team of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls (SH&G) designed at least two buildings at the complex, a factory building (1906), and a mill building (1917), although it is not clear if these two particular buildings are the ones that are still extant today. Detroit Copper and Brass Rolling Mills was absorbed by Anaconda Copper and Brass in 1927 (Ashlee 2005), although it retained its own identity until 1960 when the name was changed to Anaconda American Brass.

### Significance

The Detroit Copper and Brass Rolling Mills complex is listed on the SRHS, and CCRG recommends it eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A (events) and C (architecture). Under Criterion A, the complex is significant as the former headquarters of the Detroit Copper and Brass Rolling Mills Corporation. The company was a major industry in Detroit during the early twentieth century and was a key player in the growth of Detroit's automotive industry. Under Criterion C, the complex is significant for its architectural illustration of a utilitarian factory building and more formal offices. The monitor-roof industrial building remains an intact representation of the former industrial complex, and the office as an intact building with Georgian Revival style elements. The office building is one of only two such Georgian Revival style buildings located in the DRIC study area (the other is the St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church Complex Rectory, discussed later in this section). On the monitor-roof industrial building, the

only alterations appear to be the addition of modern metal siding. In regards to the office building, alterations include the removal original windows, and the construction of two small additions to the south elevation, which have earned significance in their own right based on their construction over 50 years ago. The alterations on both of the buildings have somewhat diminished the complex's integrity of design and materials. Additionally, the setting of the complex has been altered by the demolition of the majority of buildings once located at the property; however, the complex still retains integrity of location workmanship, feeling, and association, and remains a testament to one of the largest fabricators of copper and brass in Michigan.

## **Mistersky Power Station Complex/City of Detroit Public Lighting Commission, 5425 West Jefferson Avenue (Tier 2)**

### Description

The Mistersky Power Station Complex/City of Detroit Public Lighting Commission is a municipal power complex comprised of a mix of modern and historic structures built from 1926 to the present (Figures 3.2.1-31 and 3.2.1-32; Appendix C-15). Five historic structures at the complex have reached significance from age and are important for their association with the public works history of Detroit. For over 80 years the station has supplied electricity to most of the public buildings throughout the City of Detroit, including several in the DRIC study area.

The Mistersky Power Station Complex/City of Detroit Public Lighting Commission is located on the south side of West Jefferson Avenue with the Detroit River forming the southern boundary for the property (Appendix B:12, 16, 17). West Jefferson Avenue and several large industrial buildings are located directly north of the complex. To the east is the former Detroit Harbor Terminal Building. To the west is a vacant industrial lot, and farther west is the NRHP-listed Fort Wayne.

The Mistersky Power Station Complex/City of Detroit Public Lighting Commission is comprised of a mix of modern and historic structures that provides the City of Detroit with electrical power.<sup>3-1</sup> Five structures at the complex (all constructed in 1926), have reached significance from age: the powerhouse, a machine shop (located northeast of the power station), the breaker house (located south of the power station), the screen house (located southeast of the power station), and the transformer and switch house (attached to the west elevation of the power station). These five buildings date to the same time period and are the oldest structures located at the complex.

For the most part, the five buildings are brick-faced, steel-framed structures that rest on concrete floors. The majority of the structures are two to three-stories; the power station is the tallest of the five structures, rising six stories. The buildings are largely vernacular in style but stone accents, towers, recessed window openings, and brick corbelling add décor. Modern associated sub-station equipment is scattered about the five main buildings of the complex. Most of the modern structures are constructed of iron or concrete block and were added as needed. Seven oil tanks of undetermined age are located at the rear of the complex, close to the Detroit River. It should be noted that an oil house (original to the complex) has been demolished. The five original buildings appear to be architecturally intact. Minor alterations include some replaced window and door openings, and the covering of others.

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<sup>3-1</sup> Access to the complex was not granted by the City of Detroit; therefore, an accurate current count of buildings is not possible. Information about the construction history of the buildings was obtained through review of Sanborn Insurance Company atlases and City of Detroit annual reports.



Figure 3.2.1-31. Mistersky Power Station Complex/City of Detroit Public Lighting Commission



## History

The first Public Lighting Commission in the City of Detroit was appointed in 1893, shortly after passage of an act by the state legislature that permitted the city to own and operate its own electrical power plant. The first such plant in Detroit was located on the south side of Atwater Street, between Bates and Randolph Streets, and began operations in 1895. This plant furnished electrical current for street lighting and provided electrical power to all public buildings in Detroit until the opening of the Mistersky complex in 1927 (Demeter and Weir 2006).

On May 23, 1927, Mistersky began operations (DPL 1953:251). The complex was designed by the locally-famous architect team of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls (SH&G). SH&G was called upon to design many power plants throughout the state of Michigan during the early twentieth century, but, according to Holleman and Gallagher (1978:109), Mistersky was perhaps the most successful of these endeavors. The main structure of the complex, the powerhouse, successfully incorporated “mass, beauty of proportion, and relation of voids and solids” that, “together with texture and color, effectively expressed strength and power.” The interior of the powerhouse had a huge, empty space that accommodated generating equipment, with ample light and ventilation for the machinery and the men who operated it (Holleman and Gallagher 1978:113).

Named for Frank R. Mistersky, general superintendent under whom the plant was developed, at the time of its inauguration the complex was believed to be one of the largest municipally owned generating stations in the United States. The plant furnished power for transmission at 24,000 volts by an underground cable system to various substations. These substations, in turn, operated municipal street railways, pumping plants, street lights, and provided electrical power to city and county buildings (City of Detroit 1930:287). Today the plant generates power for the City Lighting Commission (Hauk-Abonyi and Horvath-Monrreal 1975:9).

## Significance

The Mistersky Power Station Complex/City of Detroit Public Lighting Commission is recommended as eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A (events). Under Criterion A, the complex is significant for its association with the public works history of Detroit. For nearly 80 years, the architect-designed complex has supplied power to the majority of public facilities in Detroit, including in Delray. The setting of the complex has been altered somewhat by the loss of at least one original-period structure (oil house), and the construction of modern structures. These changes have somewhat diminished the integrity of setting. Further, some window and door openings have been altered, reducing the integrity of materials; however, the complex still retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.

## **Detroit Fire Department Engine Company No. 29, 7600 West Jefferson Avenue (Tier 2)**

### Description

The Detroit Fire Department Engine Company 29 was constructed in 1907 and is significant for its association with the social welfare/fire protection history of Delray (Figures 3.2.1-33 and 3.2.1-34; Appendix C-16). Since 1907, the station has since served as the primary source of fire protection for Delray and the DRIC study area, and continues this role today from its historic location.

The Detroit Fire Department Engine Company 29 is located on the north side of West Jefferson Avenue, on a block bounded by Crossley Street to the west and Solvay Street to the east



Figure 3.2.1-33. Detroit Fire Department Engine Company 29

Source: Sanborn Map Company 1978 Revised 1992

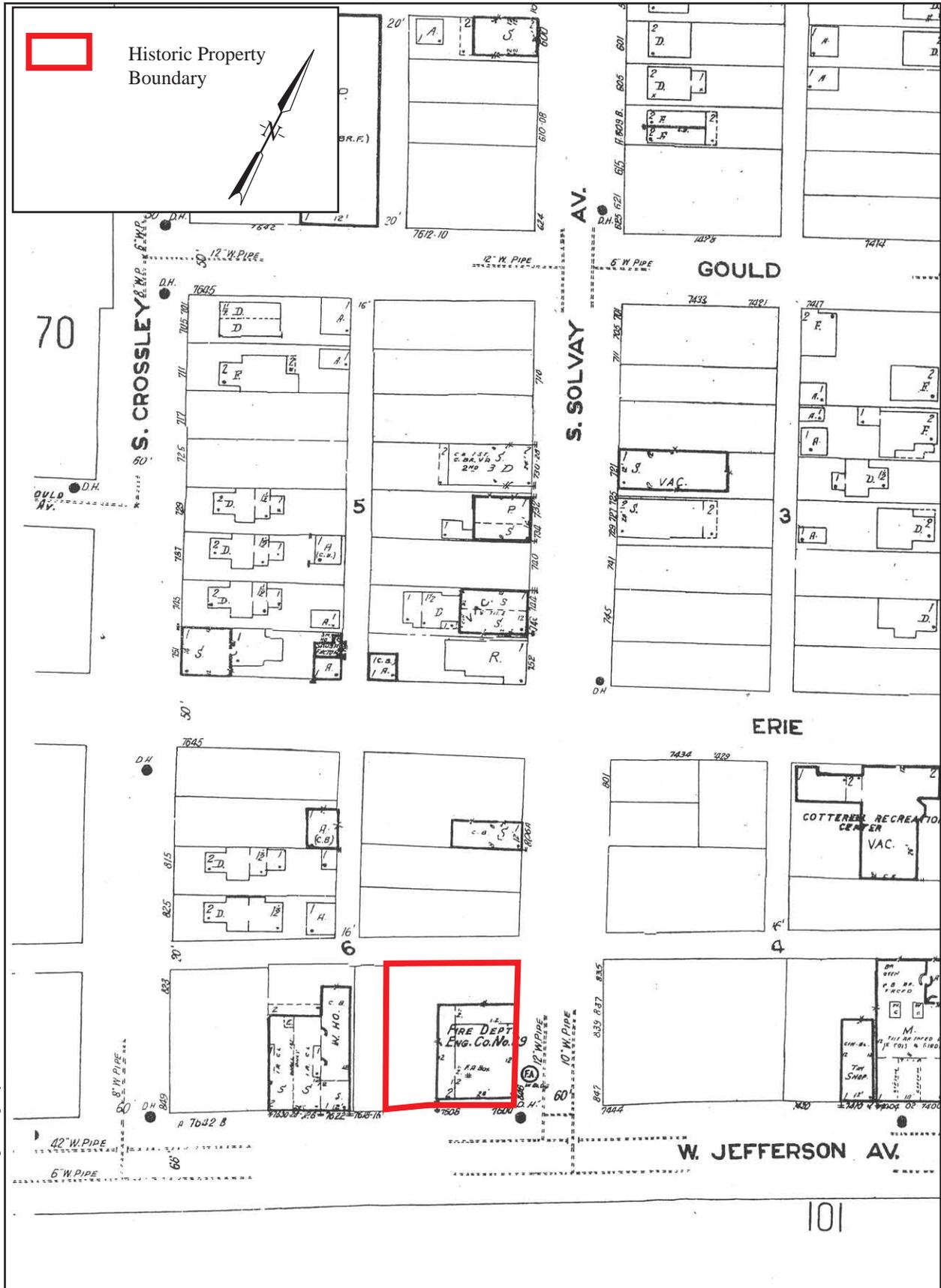


Figure 3.2.1-34. Detroit Fire Department Engine Company 29, 1992

(Appendix B:7). A small alley forms the northern boundary of the property. Solvay Street is located directly east of the building, and Lockeman's Hardware is located directly west.

The two-story station is oriented perpendicular to West Jefferson Avenue and is constructed primarily of brick, laid out in a Flemish Bond pattern. The vernacular building is rectilinear in form and has a flat metal roof. A pedimented parapet is located on the façade. Also located on the façade is a concrete block water table (not present on any other elevations). Brick corbelling, brick hoodmolds and keystones add visual interest to the otherwise vernacular building. Alterations to the building include replaced doors and windows, some altered openings (which have been filled with glass block), and replaced overhead garage doors. The interior has been modestly modified, but essentially retains many original features, including original wood beams. The setting of the building has been altered by the construction of a large cell tower at the rear of the structure.

### History

Part of Battalion 7, Fire Company 29 was officially organized in May of 1907 (Detroit Fire Fighters 2007). The architect-designed station was also constructed that year (Polk 1907:2735). R.E. Raseman and F.J. McInnis were the designers, while John Finn served as contractor for the construction of the building which totaled \$13,025.00 (Detroit Fire Fighters 2007).

Although other fire stations were constructed in Southwest Detroit at the time, Fire Company 29 was the only one built to serve Delray. The station was strategically situated on West Jefferson Avenue to meet the geographical demands of Delray's explosive growth in the early twentieth century. The station was remodeled in 1930 at a cost of \$19, 536.00 (Detroit Fire Fighters 2007). Little other published information is available for the building.

### Significance

The Detroit Fire Engine Company 29 is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A (events). The station is significant for its association with the social welfare/fire protection history of Delray. Strategically located on West Jefferson Avenue, the station was the only fire protection service in the neighborhood serving the needs of the residents of Delray. The station remains fully-functional today. Replaced windows and doors, altered openings, glass block, and a large cell tower have diminished the integrity of materials and design, but the building retains structurally sound. The Detroit Fire Engine Company 29 retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.

## **Detroit Harbor Terminal Building, 4468 W. Jefferson Avenue (Tier 2)**

### Description

The Detroit Harbor Terminal Building was constructed in 1925 and is significant for its connection with the international shipping/trade industry of the DRIC study area, Detroit and beyond (Figures 3.2.1-35, 3.2.1-36, and 3.2.1-37; Appendix C-17). Beginning in 1925 a number of commercial enterprises utilized the building for storage/shipping space, taking advantage of the building's close proximity to the Detroit River and points beyond. Further, the building was designed by prominent Detroit architect Albert Khan, and is reflective of the Art Deco style.

The Detroit Harbor Terminal Building is located south of West Jefferson Avenue, between Clark and McKinstry Streets, with the Detroit River forming the southern boundary of the property



Figure 3.2.1-35. Detroit Harbor Terminal Building



Figure 3.2.1-36. Former Army Warehouse

Source: Sanborn Map Company 1923 Revised 1950

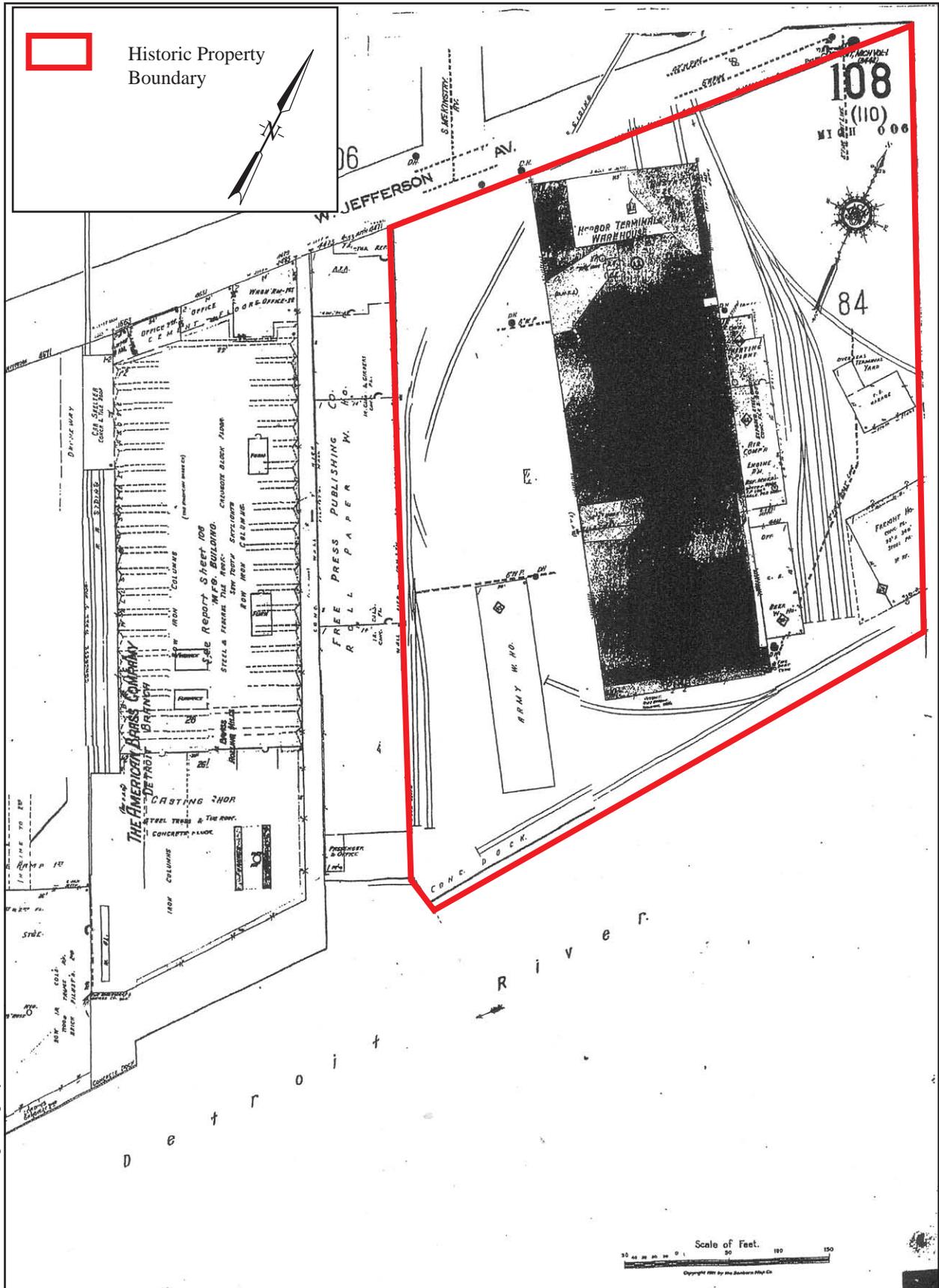


Figure 3.2.1-37. Detroit Harbor Terminal Building, 1950

(Appendix B:16). A paved, commercial parking lot is located east of the building, and is associated with the complex. Located west of the building, on the same property is a rectilinear structure known as the Army warehouse (Sanborn Map Company 1923).

The ten-story building rests on a concrete slab foundation (supported by piles), and measures approximately 500 feet long and 160 feet wide (Whitney Brothers Construction Company 1925). While the building is mostly rectilinear and symmetrical in form, several small one-story structures extend from the east elevation. These structures serve as shelter for a heating plant, engine room, and a beer warehouse. The building features fireproof concrete construction, including reinforced concrete walls with 90-percent steel and glass frame (Sanborn Map Company 1921-1951).

Running the entire length of the first story on the west elevation are large round concrete piers. Between each set of piers are overhead doors, used for shipping and delivery purposes. A metal smokestack is affixed to the east elevation. Several small structures, including a water reservoir/tower, are located atop of the roof. The south elevation does not feature any window openings. Of particular interest are three distinctly different fenestration patterns on both the east and west elevation. The size of the window openings are reduced as the building progresses, from the north to the south. The façade retains early, reeded glass block windows, particularly around the door openings and on the first-story windows.

Also located on the property, southwest of the terminal building, is a much smaller, one-story building constructed of concrete block. The ca. 1945 building is capped with a metal hangar roof, and features glass block windows and original overhead doors. The building is indicated as an Army warehouse on a Sanborn map (Sanborn Map Company 1923 [Revised 1950]). This Sanborn map shows other buildings on the property that have been demolished, including a freight house and a garage.

Although constructed in 1925, the terminal building arguably features design elements typically associated with the Art Deco style, a popular architectural style for commercial and industrial buildings built between 1927 and 1940 (Gordon 1992:112). The box-like, streamline design, stepped-back massing, polychromatic concrete wall surface, vertical window bands, metal doors, and metal casement windows are all indicative of the style (Gordon 1992:112). Some broken and/or missing windows and doors, and glass block infill windows have somewhat diminished the building's integrity of materials. Minor fire damage is also evident.

### History

Initially known as the Detroit Railway and Harbor Terminal, the building was constructed in 1925 from plans designed by Albert Khan. Parklap, Inc., of New York City, New York served as the general contractors for the project, while the actual construction work was completed by the Whitney Brothers Construction Company, of Duluth, Minnesota. The Whitney Brothers provided the materials and labor for the completion of the building, which, at the time, included a timber dock (no longer present) (Whitney Brothers Construction Company 1925).

Upon completion, the building was hailed as the “greatest step yet in the development of Detroit’s waterfront” (*Detroit News* 1926). Its construction was seen as the first move to handle, by water, the great trade with foreign markets--of which the motor industry and many other industries were diligently cultivating in all ports of the world at the time. Initially managed by the National Terminals Corporation (who also maintained similar warehouses throughout the Midwest), the terminal soon became the handler of not only great lakes shipping, but also regular overseas

shipping by steamers to and from Europe (*Detroit News* 1926). When opened for business, the terminal included approximately 1,100 feet of dockage, and was serviced direct by three railroads. A reciprocal switching system places the building in close touch with every railroad in the city (Whitney Brothers Construction Company 1925).

With 2,500,000 cubic feet of cold storage space, 800,000 square feet of floor space, and 600,000 square feet of office space, the Detroit Railway and Harbor Terminal building boasted a wide variety of tenants (Whitney Brothers Construction Company 1925). In 1926, tenants included the La Choy Food Product Company, Frozen Lolly Coating Company, Jerpe-Detroit Company (butter), and M. Unger and Company (importers) (Polk 1926-7:2427). Also of note were the tenants Nicholson Transit Company, Nicholson Universal Steamship Company, and Victory Gwatkin, steamship agent, all of whose location along the riverfront would have been advantageous to their business. The 1927-1928 city directory indicated the building was a rail and water terminal warehouse with cold storage (Polk 1927-8:886). Advertisements for the warehouse facilities included:

Complete Cold and General Storage  
Distribution facilities  
Direct connections with lake line  
Pennsylvania, Pere Marquette, Wabash and other railroads  
On reciprocal switching arrangements, H. Brown, mgr. [Polk 1927-8: 489].

By 1937, the building had changed its name to Detroit Harbor Terminal Building, and boasted a great number of tenants than in the early years. Manufacturers' agents, such as D. A. Steward Oil Company were located in the building along with several food manufacturers and wholesalers (Polk 1937: 2513). The large size and riverside location of the structure was an advantage to firms such as the Motor City Distributors, Advance Transportation Company of Illinois and the Western Auto Company warehouse. Managers of the building continued to note their location as a selling point to future tenants. In one ad they boasted, "...with 2000 feet of dock on the Detroit River / Marine equipment for bulk and package freight / Warehouse distribution plus financing" (Polk 1937:254).

With the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, the Port of Detroit experienced a huge increase in business and size. As the only major port in the United States financed entirely with private capital, the longevity of the Detroit Harbor Terminal was poised to reap the benefits of the new trade by the 1970s (Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce 1970:1:2). Docks were expanded at the facility, cranes were added to speed handling at its five-berth complex and transit shed space was erected to meet the growing needs of international trade. In 1973, the Detroit Harbor Terminals 25-acre site included rail connections to Norfolk & Western, Penn-Central, and Chesapeake & Ohio Railroads with reciprocal switching to all other lines and ten cranes of various sized to accommodate the needs of their new customers (Buysse 1973:46-7).

Business at the Detroit Harbor Terminals continued into the 1980s. By 1989 a new tenant was located in the building, Bob-Lo Island Administration and Information (Bresser's 1989:267). Bob-Lo was a name recognized by Detroiters since the steamships of the Detroit, Belle Isle and Windsor Ferry Company first took picnickers to the Canadian island in the middle of the Detroit River in 1898 (Lochbiler 1973:136). Later known as the Bob-Lo Excursion Line, the first steamship docks were located at the foot of Woodward and later to behind Cobo Hall (Nolan 2000:2-3).

### Significance

The Detroit Harbor Terminal Building is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A (events) and C (architecture). Under Criterion A, The Detroit Harbor Terminal Building is significant for its connection with the international shipping/trade industry of the DRIC study area, Detroit and beyond. Beginning in 1925 a number of commercial enterprises utilized the building for storage/shipping space, taking advantage of the building's close proximity to the Detroit River and points beyond. Although partially vacant, the building stands as a testament to the prosperous era of the 1920s. Under Criterion C, the building is significant for its direct association with Albert Kahn, a prominent Detroit architect, and for showcasing design influences of the Art Deco style. The only alterations appear to be the addition of few glass block infill windows, and some windows are broken and/or missing. Minimal fire damage is also evident. These changes have slightly diminished the integrity of materials; however, the Detroit Harbor Terminal Building retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association, and remains structurally sound.

### **Holy Cross Hungarian Roman Catholic Church Complex, 8423 South Street (Tier 3; see also Section 3.2.2)**

#### Description

The Holy Cross Hungarian Roman Catholic Church Complex is a religious complex constructed between ca. 1924 and 1957 (according to the date stones located on the buildings) (Figures 3.2.1-38 and 3.2.1-39; Appendix C-18). The complex includes a church, school, rectory, statue, garage, and brick wall. All but the garage are contributing to the complex, which is significant for its association with the Hungarian Roman Catholic history of Delray, the City of Detroit, and the State of Michigan. Presently, the church is the only one in the state of Michigan providing worship services in Hungarian. The church is also significant for its architecture, reflective of the Late Gothic Revival style.

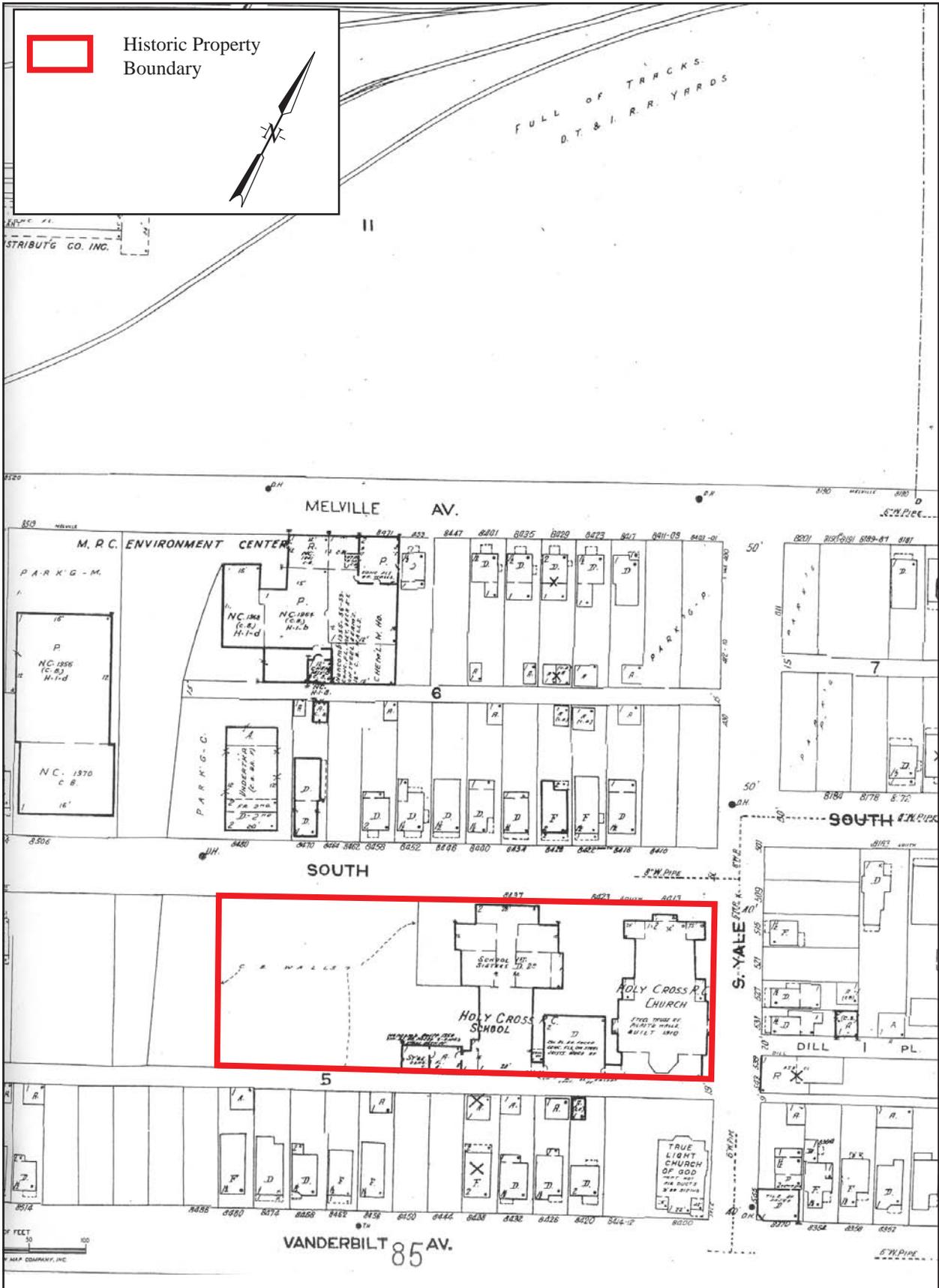
The Holy Cross Hungarian Roman Catholic Church Complex is located at 8423 South Street, in what is considered by many the heart of Delray (see Figure 3.2.2-6). The complex stands out, as it is surrounded almost entirely by the remnants of once vibrant Delray residential neighborhoods. A few residences remain scattered to the north, south, east, and west. A small pocket of industrial buildings are located to the north of the complex along Melville Avenue, and a church is located to the south of the complex.

The Holy Cross complex contains five contributing resources that include a church, school, rectory, statue, and brick wall. The church is situated at the corner of the intersection of South and Yale Streets. All other buildings of the complex are located directly west of the church.

The church stands two stories and is laid out in a Latin Cross plan (Gordon 1992:61). The façade of the church faces north and is perhaps the most decorative elevation, as it is flanked by two towers. Constructed of monochromatic brick, the church is supported by a steel truss system and has a raised basement with water table. The gable roof of the church is covered with slate shingles. The church displays elements of the Late Gothic Revival style, a popular style used in early twentieth-century church construction. Design elements of the style found on the church include brick walls with stone trim, finials, stone buttresses, gothic-arched windows with stained glass, and stone mullions (Gordon 1992:105). A small one-story addition is appended to the rear of the church.



Figure 3.2.1-38. Holy Cross Hungarian Roman Catholic Church Complex



Source: Sanborn Map Company 1978 Revised 1992

Figure 3.2.1-39. Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church Complex, 1992

Like the church, the school is constructed of brick and features a symmetrical layout with a nearly square footprint. Rising two stories, it rests on a concrete-based foundation and has a flat roof. A large gabled roof addition is appended to the rear elevation of the school. The school is largely vernacular in style but is accented with stone trim and keystones. Many of the original window openings on the school have been altered; some have been replaced completely, while others have been bricked-in or filled with glass block. The façade doors are original. Of interest is the name *Szent Kereszt Iskola*, Hungarian for Holy Cross School, which is carved on the facade. The school is presently closed.

The rectory is a separate structure located between the church and school and set back from the roadway. Constructed of brick, the building is largely vernacular in style and has a square footprint resting on a concrete foundation. The hipped roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Vinyl siding is present on the wide overhanging soffits. All of the original windows have been replaced with vinyl windows. The rectory was constructed in 1951 (cornerstone).

Centrally located at the front of the rectory is a *pieta* (statue of the Virgin Mary mourning the dead Christ). A plaque is affixed to the statue, celebrating the World War II veterans of the parish. According to the plaque, the statue was commemorated in 1953.

A unique contributing factor to the church is a brick wall that encircles portions of the complex. The wall is crowned with a fence constructed of wrought iron and evenly spaced columns with limestone caps. The fence extends from the rear of school, west toward the edge of the property, and finally parallels South Street, where it ends at the façade of the church. Located within the boundaries of the fence is a large parking lot and a non-contributing garage.

### History

A majority of the immigrants that settled in Delray were Hungarian, many of whom were Roman Catholic. Accordingly, wherever any significant concentration of ethnic groups settled, they almost invariably established their own parish and as soon as possible built a church. Immigrants felt most comfortable worshipping with their own countrymen in their native language, which resulted in the organization of the working-class parish of Holy Cross in 1905-1906 (Godzak 2004:11). The church was reputedly the first to serve the Delray Hungarian Roman Catholic population (Vinyard 1998:152). The land for the church was purchased two years earlier in 1904 with funds gathered from the community. Designed from plans prepared by architect Harry J. Rill, the church was constructed in 1908, and also housed a school, rectory, and convent (BHC 2006); however, in 1910, the parish demolished the original church and built the present building (Sanborn Map Company 1978 [1992]). Hungarian-born architect Henry Kohner designed the present church. Kohner, a resident of Delray, was responsible for the design of a variety of buildings, including theaters, offices, churches of different denominations, and even single family homes in Delray (Godzak 2000:38). Perhaps his biggest contributions within the DRIC study area include Holy Cross, Szent Janos Gor Kath. Magyar Templom, and the Grande Theater on West Jefferson Avenue (demolished). Kohner also served as the general contractor of the construction of Holy Cross (*Detroit News* 2005).

Even with the large concentration of Hungarian Roman Catholics in the Delray neighborhood, the construction of the grand brick church was a costly undertaking, and one that was not completed until ca. 1924/25 (BHC 2006; Vinyard 1998:153). The church cornerstone was blessed by Bishop Michael Gallagher on Thanksgiving day, 1924 (Godzak 2000:38), who also consecrated the church edifice on September 20, 1925 (Godzak 2004:11).

At the time Holy Cross was consecrated, the interior remained unfinished. The priest at the time, Father Louis Kovacs, envisioned an ornately detailed worship space. However, his death in 1927, the Depression, and World War II postponed the completion of the interior until 1948, when Hungarian artist Andras Daubner was commissioned to create a series of murals throughout the church. The murals depict the mysteries of the Rosary (Godzak 2000:39; Godzak 2004:11). Also of interest are the many fine stained glass windows depicting Hungarian saints, Hungarian art work, and a carving listing the names of the counties in Hungary from which the immigrants came (Hauk-Abonyi and Horvath-Monrreal 1975:13).

The school associated with Holy Cross was constructed on South Avenue beginning in 1906 and was open for students in January 1907 (Vinyard 1998:154). The “school” actually consisted of two rudimentary rooms within the larger church. One room was used for the kindergarten, first and second grades, and the second room used by all the older children (Vinyard 1998:154). In part, it was hoped that the school would help the children deal with the language barrier experienced at McMillan, the public elementary school on West End, where English was the preferred language, or the German parochial school at St. Elizabeth’s. This issue was not totally resolved, however, since the nuns assigned to work at the school did not speak Hungarian, nor did they understand the Hungarian community’s customs and social order, resulting in constant friction (Vinyard 1998:155).

By the early 1920s, with the requirement for youngsters to attend school, the tiny church school at Holy Cross proved much too small. In 1923, the Holy Cross priest reported 500 students in the parish school, but another 500 children from the Hungarian community were forced to attend public school since the parochial facility simply could not accommodate them (Vinyard 1998:155-6). The parish insisted the school be enlarged. They quickly added four classrooms and two clubrooms to the building resulting in \$42,000 of debt for the community. In spite of the parishioners’ displeasure at the debt, the following year (1922) saw the largest eighth grade graduating class to date, 27 children (Vinyard 1998:156).

Changes in the demographics of the Delray community, with an increasing number of different ethnic groups buying up the homes vacated by the second- and third-generation Hungarians, resulted in the lack of funds and students to justify the construction of their own high school. For a time, students who wished to further their education attended the public Southwestern High School, but this action met with disapproval from the parish priest, Father Nagy. By the early 1930s the high school issue was resolved when an agreement was reached with nearby All Saints parish on Fort Street. All Saints accepted tuition-paying students from the Holy Cross parish, providing interested students an opportunity to continue their education in a parochial setting (Vinyard 1998:159). Due to shifting population trends of the late twentieth century, the Holy Cross school was closed (the exact date is unknown).

In Delray, as in many other urban neighborhoods of the early twentieth century, the church was not only the center for the religious life of the community, but often filled a social aspect as well. Clubs met in the church basements (or in clubhouses or even restaurants) on Saturday nights for dancing and music. These revelries were not limited to the young and single, since it was common for entire families, including young children, to join in the party.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Holy Cross actively promoted the support of the businesses and clubs within Delray by the Hungarian community. Father Nagy, a priest at Holy Cross, encouraged the community to “patronize always their own independent merchants” rather than the chain stores that were moving in to the area. Nagy went on to warn the community that the chains were interested “only in profits” and not “in schools or other civic projects” (Vinyard

1998:158). During the Great Depression, the church continued reaching out to the Delray community by operating a soup kitchen, allowing the continued support of the neighborhood's residents. As many automobile workers suddenly found themselves unemployed, the soup kitchen, named after St. Elizabeth, patron saint of Hungary, provided free meals (Godzak 2000:38).

The Hungarian character of the parish, and of the Delray neighborhood, became more attenuated with each succeeding decade after the 1930s. The decline accelerated after World War II, when the younger generations began moving to the suburbs. In 1974, Hungarian Franciscans assumed administrative responsibilities for Holy Cross, which continues today (Godzak 2000:39). The church remains the singular bastion for Hungarian Catholics in Delray, Detroit, and the entire State of Michigan. Holy Cross continues to draw parishioners from the suburbs, many of whom are descendants of the original Delray residents and some who lived in Delray not long ago. An effort by Father Kiss in the 1990s led to the exterior and interior restoration of the church. Father Kiss also designed the current altar (Jennifer Balog, personal communication 2007).

### Significance

The Holy Cross Hungarian Roman Catholic Church Complex is recommended as eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A (events) and C (architecture). Under Criterion A, the church complex is significant for its association with the Hungarian Catholics of Delray, the City of Detroit, and the State of Michigan. The Hungarian Roman Catholics were at one time the largest ethnic group of Delray. Of all the churches constructed in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century in Delray, Holy Cross is the longest-operating church still associated with its original parish. Another long-established congregation in the area, St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church held its final mass on October 28, 2007. At present, it is the only Hungarian Roman Catholic church still operating in Delray, in the City of Detroit, and in the State of Michigan. For almost 100 years, the church complex has continued to draw Hungarian Roman Catholic parishioners. Under Criterion C, Holy Cross church is significant for its architecture, as an intact structure reflective of the Late Gothic Revival style. The complex has undergone few alterations. The doors on the church façade have been replaced. Some window and doors on the school are replacements, have been covered, or are bricked-in. These changes have diminished the integrity of materials only modestly. Overall, the Holy Cross Hungarian Roman Catholic Church Complex retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### **Szent Janos Gor Kath. Magyar Templom/Jahoveh Jireh, 441 South Harbaugh Street (Tier 3; see also Section 3.2.2)**

#### Description

The Szent Janos Gor Kath. Magyar Templom, today known as the Jehovah Jireh Church, is located on east side of Harbaugh Street and is significant as a classically inspired, Romanesque Revival style church (Figures 3.2.1-40 and 3.2.1-41; Appendix C-19). The church was constructed from plans by a local Hungarian-architect Henry Kohner, for use by the Hungarian Greek Catholics of the DRIC study area. The namestone on the church indicates it was constructed between 1918 and 1922.

Located near the eastern edge of Delray, at 441 South Harbaugh Street, the church is situated immediately north of South Street, and faces southwest (see Figure 3.2.2-6). The church is surrounded to the north, south, east, and west by scattered residential and commercial development and empty, grassy lots.



Figure 3.2.1-40. Szent. Janos Gor Kath. Magyar Templom/Jehovah Jireh Church



Source: Sanborn Map Company 1978 Revised 1992

Figure 3.2.1-41. Szent. Janos Gor Kath. Magyar Templom/Jehovah Jireh Church, 1992

Szent Janos Gor Kath. Magyar Templom/Jehovah Jireh stands two stories with towers and a steeple rising even higher into the skyline. The church is laid out in a Latin Cross plan (Gordon 1992:61). The façade of the church faces southwest and is by far the most decorative elevation of the church. Constructed of monochromatic brick, the church is supported by a steel truss system resting on a limestone foundation. The church's design draws from a number of architectural styles. The brick construction, round-arched windows and doors, brick-corbelling, polygonal towers, and belt-courses are all indicative of the Romanesque Revival style (Gordon 1992:81). Classically inspired design elements include Corinthian columns and smooth-cut stone.

The church has undergone few exterior alterations, although a ca. 1960 addition extends from the north elevation of the church. This addition incorporates a rectory and garage, both constructed of brick, into the complex. Although constructed much later than the church, the addition has historically been utilized for religious purposes. Other noticeable exterior alterations include the replacement of the façade front doors, and a brick-filled window opening on the south elevation.

### History

Szent Janos Gor Kath. Magyar Templom (St. John Greek Catholic Hungarian Church) served the Hungarian Greek Catholic population of Delray from at least 1918 to the early 1960s. Hungarian Greek Catholics were essentially comprised of Orthodox Greeks, who, displaced by Turkish invasions in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, moved into Hungary and became catholic but retained their Byzantine heritage. Small numbers eventually made their way to Delray and attended St. John.

Little published information is available for the church. A date stone on the church façade suggests that the building was constructed between 1918 and 1922. The church is indicated on a Sanborn map as a Hungarian Greek Catholic Church (Sanborn Map Company 1978 [1992]). The architect-designed church was constructed from plans drawn by Henry Kohner. The Hungarian-born architect spent the early years of his career in Delray, even residing on Solvay Street for a time. Kohner also designed nearby Holy Cross, and is said to have helped engineer restoration plans for the Grande Theater on West Jefferson Avenue (demolished).

The 1925-26 Detroit City Directory lists the church as St. John the Baptist. The Reverend of the church was John C. Lukach, who resided at 8578 South Street (Polk 1925-26:96). The church is first indicated as St. John's Hungarian Greek Catholic Church in 1928-29, with Rev. Eugene V. Kapisinsky officiating (Polk 1928-29:1187, 2380). Detroit city directories indicated numerous changes in the church leadership, beginning in 1936 with Rev. Goydick Method; in 1941 with Rev. Artin Louis and in 1954 with Rev. John B. Gernat (Polk 1936:1936; 1941:2390; 1954:1596). The 1964 directory shows the address as the home of the St. John's Greek Catholic Men's Club, but there is no mention of the church.

Although it is no longer associated with Hungarian Greek Catholics of Delray, the building continues to serve as a church today, most recently functioning as the Jehovah Jireh Church, under the leadership of Bishop Phillip Pullium.

### Significance

Szent Janos Gor Kath. Magyar Templom/Jehovah Jireh is recommended eligible under Criterion C (architecture), as an architect-designed, Romanesque Revival style church with classical influences. It stands today as a testament to the Hungarian Greek Catholics of the DRIC study area, and further cements the ethnic character that was Delray during the early twentieth

century. Although the congregation has changed, the current faithful have respected the church history and maintained the ornate exterior quite well. The building retains integrity of location, setting, materials, design and feeling.

### **St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church Complex, 844 Harbaugh Street (Tier 3)**

#### Description

St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church Complex was constructed ca. 1923 (according to the cornerstone on the church) (Figures 3.2.1-42 and 3.2.1-43; Appendix C-19). The complex contains a church, rectory, commemorative marker, and two garages (noncontributing). The complex is the last public reminder of the former Polish settlement of Delray. Poles in Delray were displaced beginning with the construction of I-75 in the 1960s and the subsequent development of the City of Detroit Wastewater Treatment Plant in the 1970s, both of which resulted in widespread bulldozing of block after block of neighborhood homes (Scott 2001). Due to shifting population trends and declining enrollment, the Archdiocese of Detroit closed the church in October 2007; the final mass was held on Sunday, October 28. In addition to its historical significance, the church is architecturally significant as an aesthetically pleasing, intact example of the Romanesque Revival style.

St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church is located near the western edge of Delray at 844 South Harbaugh Street (see Figure 3.2.2-6). A rectory is located northeast of the church. At one time the church complex also included a school (destroyed by fire during the project survey in 2006) located directly east of the church. At present, the City of Detroit Wastewater Treatment Plant occupies three-quarters of the land surrounding the church (east, south, and west). Copeland Street and scattered industrial, commercial, and residential developments are located north of the church complex.

St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church stands two stories and is laid out in a Latin Cross plan (Gordon 1992:61). The façade of the church faces south and is by far the most decorative elevation of the church. Constructed of monochromatic brick, the church is supported by a steel truss system resting on a limestone foundation with water table. The roof of the church features two small cross gables contained within a dominant front gable roof. The church displays elements of the Romanesque Revival style, a popular style for large-scale public buildings like churches, libraries, and schools. Design elements include brick construction, a façade flanked by square towers covered with various roof shapes and parapets, semi-circular arched window and door openings, and rounded corbelled brick arches, domed corner buttresses, and splayed window openings (Blumenson 1983:42-43).

The rectory is a two-story, brick building with elements of the Georgian Revival style. It is one of only two such buildings in the DRIC study area (the other is the office building at the Detroit Copper and Brass Rolling Mills Complex, discussed earlier in this section). The rectory is located directly northeast of the church and is capped with a hipped, asphalt-shingled roof. Elements of the Georgian Revival style present on the rectory include hipped roof, six-over-six windows, belt courses, columned portico, and dentilled cornice. The building is highly intact and has undergone no noticeable alterations.

A commemorative marker is located directly east of the church. The marker is constructed of both stone and slate and honors the men from St. John who perished in World War II. According to the plaque, the marker was erected in 1952.



Figure 3.2.1-42. St. John Cantius Roman Catholic Church Complex

Source: Sanborn Map Company 1978 Revised 1992

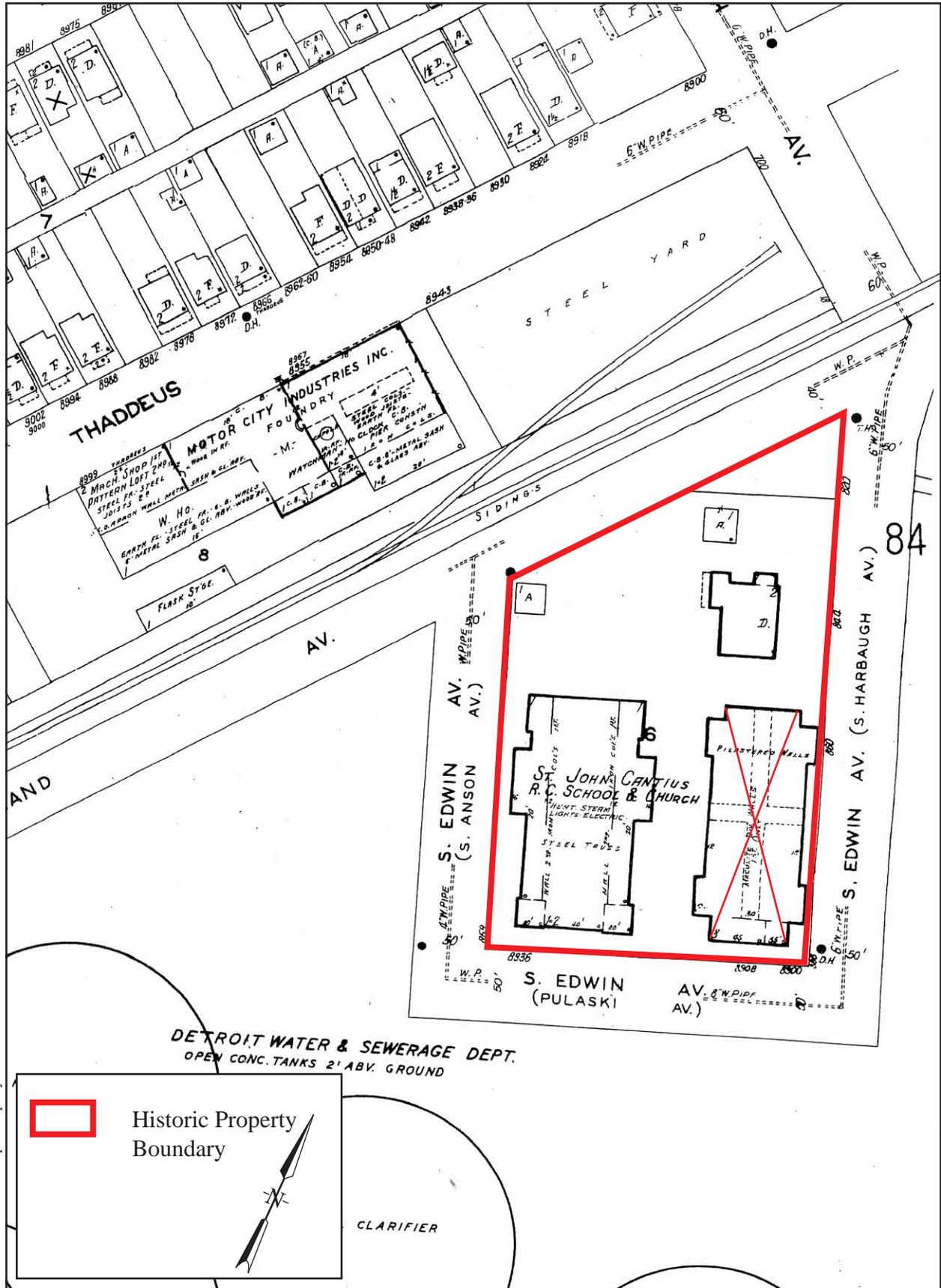


Figure 3.2.1-43. St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church Complex, 1992

## History

The St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church Complex marks the center of what was once Delray's Polish Community. The church was named in honor of John Cantius, born in Poland sometime between 1403 and 1412 (Farley and Mullin 2007). Excelling in the study of philosophy and theology, he served as a priest and eventually a Professor of Sacred Scripture until his death in 1473. Several miraculous cures were attributed to him during his lifetime, and more so after his death. Pope Clement XIII proclaimed him a saint in 1767 (Farley and Mullin 2007).

Prior to its establishment, in 1900, Poles living in the Delray vicinity attended other Catholic-based churches, including the Church of the Holy Redeemer, established outside the study area at the corner of Dix (i.e. West Vernor) and Junction in 1881 (Farmer 1890:543). Shortly after 1900, the steadily increasing Polish immigration to Delray led to the formation of the St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church (Rootsweb 2007). In 1902, the Roman Catholic diocese of Detroit appointed the Reverend John Walczak to be the founding pastor. The intent of the church was to serve the growing Polish population of Delray (Farley and Mullin 2007). Construction for the church began in 1910 and was completed in 1911. Approximately 39 Polish Catholic families helped to build the original frame church. It was only utilized a few years, however, and was replaced by the present brick church in 1923 (date stone).

For the first half of the twentieth century, Delray was a densely populated Polish area. In its heyday, this part of Delray was alive with the sights and sounds of playing children, small, family-owned businesses, and a host of foreign languages and cultures. Shortly after World War II, however, much of the population began moving to the suburbs. As of 1951, St. John was the only Polish Catholic church the study area (Badaczewski 2002:47). The beginning of the end occurred in the 1960s with the construction of I-75 farther to the north (which isolated traffic and neighborhoods), and continued in the 1970s with the construction of the Detroit Wastewater Treatment Plant, one of the largest such facilities in the entire country. Over 300 homes were demolished for the development (Farley and Mullin 2007). The original plans for the Detroit Wastewater Treatment Plant called for the demolition of St. John, but church officials, clergy, parishioners, and a few allies on the city council banded together to successfully resist demolition (Hauk-Abonyi and Horvath-Monrreal 1975:12).

Much has changed since the early twentieth century; yet, despite the absence of any nearby residential neighborhood and St. John's unfortunate location among the most malodorous industries in Detroit, the parish has managed to stave off closing, thanks to a small but fiercely devoted congregation (Godzak 2004:27). The church continues to draw a handful of aging parishioners, many of whom are former Delray residents who commute from the suburbs back to their old neighborhood each week. In April 2006, Archbishop of Detroit Adam Joseph Cardinal Maida informed the public that the church would be closing in 2007 due to declining parish enrollment, low sacramental activity, and limited financial resources (Esparanza 2007; Cardinal Rating Organization 2007). The church closed in October 2007. Telephone conversations with the Archdiocese of Detroit (June 2007) revealed that disposition of the property after the closing is unknown.

## Significance

The St. John Cantuis Polish Catholic Church Complex is recommended as eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A (events) and C (architecture). Under Criterion A, the complex is significant for its association with the Polish Catholic history of Delray. The church is all that remains of the

Polish occupation of Delray. Poles in Delray were displaced beginning with the construction of I-75 in the 1960s and the subsequent development of the Detroit Wastewater Treatment Plant in the 1970s, both of which resulted in widespread bulldozing of block after block of neighborhood homes. The church now stands alone in a 10-block area that formerly housed about 450 families, several grocery and meat markets, bars, and other Polish businesses. Under Criterion C, the church is significant as an intact example of the Romanesque Revival style. The recent destruction of the school and the development of the Detroit Wastewater Treatment Facility have significantly altered the church's integrity of setting; however, the St. John Cantius Polish Catholic Church Complex retains integrity of location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### **3.2.2 Proposed Multiple-Property Historic Districts**

#### **West Lafayette Boulevard Rowhouse District (Tier 1)**

##### Description

During fieldwork, it became evident that the area north of the Fisher Freeway (I-75) service drive contained a small concentration of contiguous multi-family dwellings, not seen in any other part of the DRIC study area. Three small-scale rowhouse buildings, constructed on West Lafayette Boulevard, retain similar scale, proportion, rhythm, silhouette, height, materials, design and association, therefore constituting a small, thematic district. The three buildings comprising the district are adjacent to one another and are not separated by any intrusions or incompatible land uses.

The proposed West Lafayette Boulevard Rowhouse District is potentially important to Detroit's architectural history, as it contains a small concentration of seldom-seen, contiguous rowhouses dating to the early twentieth century. Although vernacular in style, the buildings were constructed at the height of Detroit's industrial boom, as a way to provide affordable, worker-class housing within walking distance to many of the area's industries, or public transportation facilities. The rowhouses are a unique focal point of West Lafayette Boulevard, and are well-preserved. They maintain a high degree of building integrity.

The West Lafayette Boulevard Rowhouse District is located on Detroit's Southwest side, in an area just outside of the Delray neighborhood, and directly north of the Fisher Freeway (I-75) service drive (Figure 3.2.2-1; Appendix B:4, 10; Appendix D). Centered on West Lafayette Boulevard, the district is bounded on the west by an alley (located between Military Avenue and Cavalry Street), and on the east by Cavalry Street. The district's north-south boundaries extend only as far as the lots fronting on West Lafayette Boulevard. Residential, commercial, religious and social property types generally surround the buildings to the north, east and west. The Fisher Freeway (I-75) service drive is located directly south of the district.

The Rowhouse district is located in a typical southwest Detroit working-class neighborhood. This area was developed for the most part in the early twentieth century as a response to the need for worker housing to support all of the industry that was developing in the area. The neighborhood's varied housing stock includes many examples of popular house types of the early twentieth century, in particular the Foursquare and Bungalow. The Colonial Revival style is a popular design reflected on many of the buildings in the surrounding neighborhood.

Source: Sanborn Map Company 1923 Revised 1950

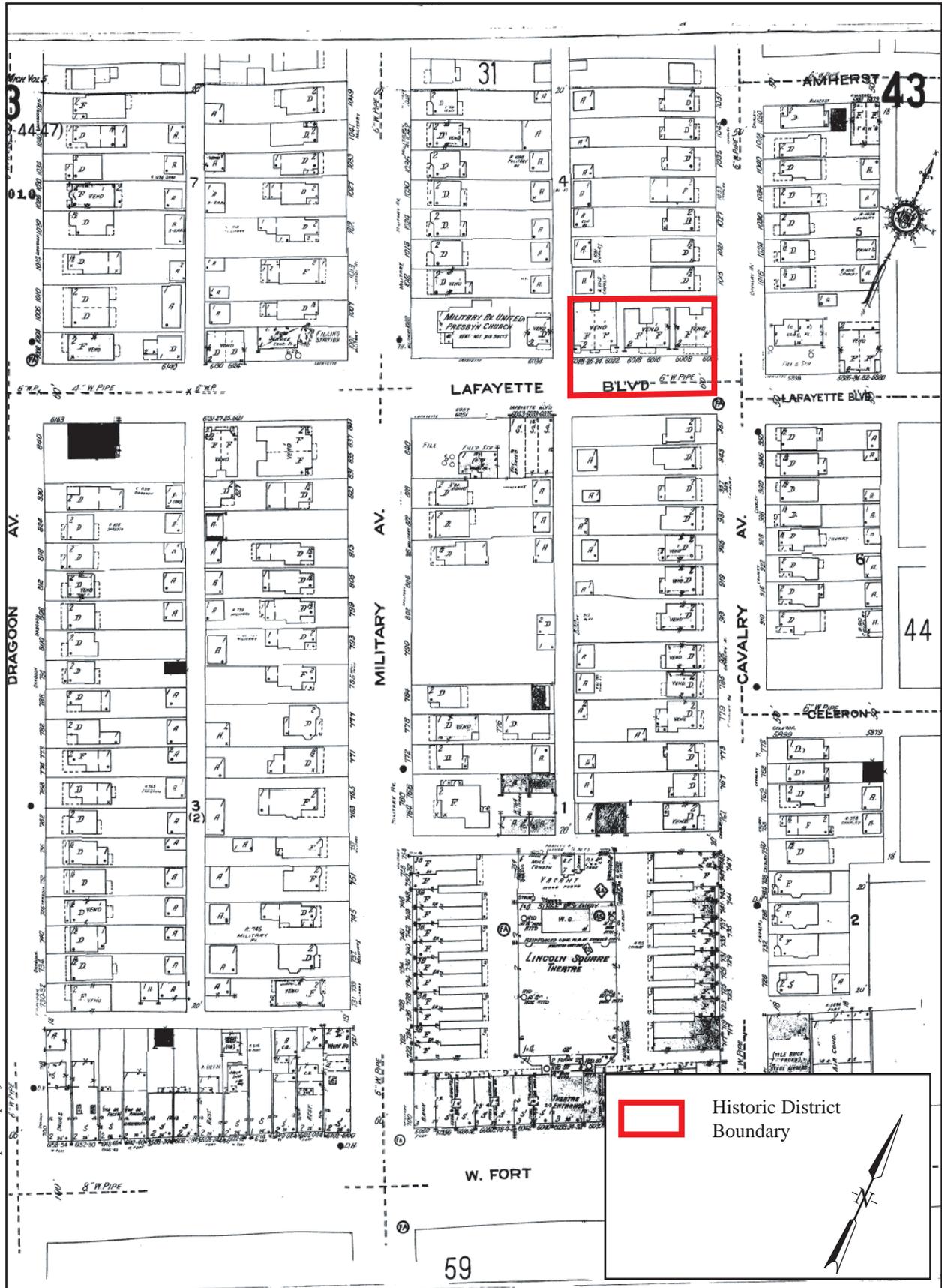


Figure 3.2.2-1. West Lafayette Boulevard Rowhouse District, 1950

The West Lafayette Boulevard Rowhouse District is comprised of three buildings located side-by-side on the north side of West Lafayette Boulevard (6006-6008, 6016-6018, and 6022-6028) (Figure 3.2.2-2). All are characteristically constructed of brick, retain a U-shaped building layout, are vernacular in style, and feature name plates on their façade.

### Individual Building Descriptions

#### *6006-6008 West Lafayette Boulevard*

The rowhouse at 6006-6008 West Lafayette Boulevard is known as the Hull Building (Figure 3.2.2-3). Rising two stories with a raised basement, Hull is oriented parallel to the roadway (with the façade facing south). A concrete foundation is present and the building is capped with a flat metal roof. A stepped parapet roofline, brick corbelling, and stone sills add décor to the otherwise vernacular building. Located on the façade is a two-story porch that does not extend the full width. The porch, built of brick, may have been re-constructed as the current design does not reflect that found on the remainder of the building. The second-story porch has been modified with the addition of a modern iron railing. Adding to the building's significance are original doors and windows, although the basement-level windows have been removed.

#### *6016-6018 West Lafayette Boulevard*

6016-6018 West Lafayette Boulevard is known as the Olive Building (Figure 3.2.2-4). This building is two stories, has a raised basement, and is oriented parallel to the roadway (with the façade facing south). Olive rests on a concrete sill foundation and has a flat, metal roof and a stepped parapet roofline on the façade only. The building retains very little design, but brick corbelling and stone sills add visual interest. A two-story porch, smaller than the porch on 6006-6008, is located on the façade and extends the width of one bay. It, too, has been modified with a modern metal railing. Most of the windows and doors are replacements, although the openings themselves remain unaltered.

#### *6022-6028 West Lafayette Boulevard*

The rowhouse at 6022-6028 West Lafayette Boulevard is known as the Florence Building (Figure 3.2.2-5). In keeping with the theme of the district, Florence also rises two stories and sits on a concrete sill foundation and raised basement. It, too, parallels the roadway. The building is capped with a flat metal roof and a stepped parapet roofline. This design offers a fresh change to the other buildings in the district. Further, each unit of Florence has a porch, unlike Hull and Olive, which have two communal porch areas. Like the other buildings, brick corbelling and stone sills add décor to the otherwise vernacular building. The porches, however, have modern iron metal railings, and most windows and doors are modern replacements. A few doors on the façade appear to be early, if not original to the building.

### History

Located in southwest Detroit, the apartment buildings are situated in an older residential neighborhood of the city that during the first few decades of the twentieth century was the pulse of Detroit's industry. This period saw people flock to the southwest side to work in the local industries, such as the Fisher Glue Plant and Parker Rendering Works, the Peerless Portland Cement Company, and Great Lakes Steel, and in auto-related businesses, such as the Fleetwood Body on Fort Street. The burgeoning auto companies even advertised for skilled trades in Europe's major cities. More immigrants settled in Detroit between 1900 and 1920 than any other



Figure 3.2.2-2. Streetscape of West Lafayette Boulevard, View Northeast



Figure 3.2.2-3. The Hull Building



Figure 3.2.2-4. The Olive Building



Figure 3.2.2-5. The Florence Building

U.S. city, except New York and Chicago (Hauk-Abonyi and Horvath-Monrreal 1975:5). Low-cost housing sprang up around the factories so workers could walk to their jobs. New factories created new jobs, drawing even more immigration to the area, mostly Hungarians, Poles, and Armenians at this time.

By the 1920s, the area had developed into a large working-class immigrant neighborhood complete with associated commercial, residential, religious and social buildings. In a pattern typical of Detroit in the first two decades of the twentieth century, a growing population meant increased demand for multi-family living units. Apartments buildings were often scaled to their domestic context: a neighborhood made up primarily of one-and two-story dwellings. Thus the West Lafayette Boulevard Rowhouse District differs from the taller apartment buildings constructed in other areas, where high property values dictated a more intensive use of land.

The 1929-1930 Detroit City Directory lists four occupants of the Hull Building that year: Florence Hull, a widow; Marshall Fields, an employee of Ford Motor Company; Luther Conelley, a guard for the Wabash Railroad; and Mary Stanton, a widow (Polk 1929:224, 357, 544, 1141, 1646). The same City Directory indicates the following four tenants at the Olive Building that year: Joseph Hoffman, a plate handler for the Detroit Free Press; Arthur Orr, a widower and an employee of Ford Motor Company; John Finlay, a clerk at Conrad Meats; and Georgina Halliday (no occupation listed) (Polk 1929:360, 522, 894, 1646). Four occupants resided at the Florence Building that year: Leroy Alexander, a factory worker at McLouth Steel; John Smouthers, a machine operator at Lincoln Park Screw; Rose Patching, a maid; and Jas. Halliday, a millwright at Ford Motor Company (Polk 1929:14, 914, 1123, 1646).

### Significance

The proposed West Lafayette Boulevard Rowhouse District is locally significant under Criterion C, as an important piece of Detroit's architectural history. It contains a collection of early, continuously spaced rowhouse buildings dating to the early twentieth century. Although vernacular, the buildings were constructed at the height of Detroit's industrial boom as a way to provide affordable working-class housing within walking distance to many of the area's industries and nearby transportation facilities. The district's development directly coincides with that of Detroit's growth as an important industrial area. The rowhouses are a unique focal point of West Lafayette Boulevard, and are well preserved. They maintain a high degree of building integrity. The integrity of setting has been diminished somewhat due to the construction of the Fisher Freeway (I-75), and the replacement of some period building materials has diminished the integrity of materials. Despite these alterations, the district maintains a high degree of building integrity, retaining integrity of design, feeling and association as an early twentieth-century working-class neighborhood. The buildings retain their original use and density of development.

### **Delray Community Historic District (Tier 3)**

The proposed Delray Community Historic District is locally significant as a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnic working-class neighborhood of Detroit. It is a well-defined area with mostly residential buildings. One social/ethnic building, three commercial buildings, five churches, and 93 residential buildings are located within the proposed boundaries of the district, approximately 104 buildings altogether, dating from 1890 to 1957 (Figure 3.2.2-6; Appendix D). The recommended district has an irregular border but is essentially bounded by Melville Street on the north and Thaddeus Street on the south. The eastern boundary generally follows West End Avenue, and the western boundary extends just west of Yale Street (Figure 3.2.2-7). The defined district provides a snapshot of what the community may have looked like in its heyday. Although



Figure 3.2.2-6. Proposed Delray Community Historic District and Delray Commercial Historic District



Figure 3.2.2-7. Streetscape, West Side of West End Avenue, View Southwest from Melville Street



Figure 3.2.2-8. Streetscape, South Side of Melville Street, View Southwest from the North Side of Road

this area contains many vacant lots and abandoned buildings, the building density in the district is high, as compared to the rest of Delray. Extant buildings are generally located on small, narrow lots, with the buildings located near the front of the lot. Some of the lots have no trees, but various plantings are scattered throughout the district, especially near the roads.

The district contains resources associated with the educational, ethnic/social, commercial, religious, and residential history of Delray, which developed in the late nineteenth century as an industrial area that attracted thousands of immigrants to work in the local factories. Working-class residents employed by the various industries, many of whom were immigrants from Eastern Europe, primarily Hungarian, settled in the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Most of the buildings that make up the proposed Delray Community Historic District are reminders of the once-vibrant ethnic community that inhabited them (Figures 3.2.2-8 through 3.2.2-13). Most importantly, it is the area residents themselves that are aware of the historic significance of their neighborhood. Thomas F. King (2003:16) notes that one way to consider significance is under the “community value school.” He explains this as the value ascribed to something because community members feel it contributes to the community’s sense of its identity, its cultural integrity, or its relationships with the biophysical, and sometime spiritual, environment.

Delray’s story is written in its irregular street pattern and the density of its development, the narrow lots supporting one (sometimes two) dwellings, the churches and small businesses interspersed among the modest dwellings, and the unpretentious buildings that expanded with their owners’ prosperity. The period of significance begins in the early 1890s, which coincides with the construction of roads and rail lines and further development of industry. The period of significance ends in 1957. This date marks the completion of the evolution of the historic immigrant neighborhood. The district, like the remainder of Delray, retained much of its character until the late 1950s.

The history of Delray is unusual as it tends to focus more on people and ethnicity rather than the built environment. Located in southwest Detroit, Delray is an older city neighborhood with a mixture of industry and low-income housing. During the first few decades of the twentieth century, it was the pulse of Detroit’s industry. By the 1920s, Delray had developed into a large working-class immigrant neighborhood complete with associated residential, religious, educational, ethnic and social buildings. Today, the area is still the industrial center of Detroit and consequently, few people reside in the neighborhoods that once seemed overpopulated with residents. Many of the buildings and structures once located here have been demolished or are deteriorated or vacant. Despite the adversity, Delray still contains remnants of vernacular architecture with Old World touches, including several ethnic churches, and businesses determined to stay open in the face of worsening odds. Residents that continue to live in the vicinity speak of old Delray with an intense sentimentality and struggle daily to keep their neighborhood alive.

The following sections present a summary of the settlement history of the district, and provide information on the educational, social/ethnic, commercial, religious, and residential resources previously and currently located in the proposed district. Appendix A (Tier 3) contains streetscape photographs illustrating the area, and Appendix D contains a list of the contributing resources.

#### Settlement History of Delray

Drawn by the availability of undeveloped land and by the presence of industrial jobs along the Detroit River, immigrants began arriving in Delray in the late nineteenth century. The majority



Figure 3.2.2-9. Streetscape, North Side of South Street, View Northwest from Yale Street



Figure 3.2.2-10. Streetscape, North Side of Vanderbilt Street, View Northeast from Yale Street



Figure 3.2.2-11. Streetscape of the Front of the New Greater Love Missionary Baptist Church, 8151 Thaddeus Street



Figure 3.2.2-12. Streetscape, South Side of South Street, View Southwest from West End Avenue



Figure 3.2.2-13. Streetscape, North Side of South Street, View Northwest from the South Side of Road

of immigrants at this time came to North America to escape political upheaval, and Delray offered not only refuge but job opportunities, the area was fast becoming the pulse of Detroit's industrial pursuits. Many immigrants found jobs as laborers and eventually induced relatives and neighbors from the old county to join them. Because the new arrivals tended to settle near those who had come earlier, chain migration fostered the establishment of enclaves of settlers who had come from the same regions.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Delray was a predominately lower middle-income community with waves of Polish, Hungarian and Armenian immigrants settling in the neighborhoods. Delray had a population of 5,000 in 1900 (Scott 2001). It was also around this time that heavy industry began to realize the geographic attractiveness of Delray and began moving in (Lowry 2004). By 1905, the community boasted a population of 8,000 (Polk 1905:561). The community remained an independent village less than a decade, undergoing annexation to the City of Detroit in 1906 (Scott 2001).

The early twentieth century saw people flock to Delray to work in the local industries, such as the Fisher Glue Plant and Parker Rendering Works, the Peerless Portland Cement Company, and Great Lakes Steel, and in auto-related businesses, such as the Fleetwood Body on Fort Street. The burgeoning auto companies even advertised for skilled trades in Europe's major cities. More immigrants settled in Detroit between 1900 and 1920 than any other U.S. city, except New York and Chicago (Hauk-Abonyi and Horvath-Monrreal 1975:5). Low-cost housing sprang up around the factories so workers could walk to their jobs. New factories created new jobs, drawing even more immigration to the area, primarily from Hungary, Poland, and Armenia. Immigrants began buying houses they lived in and the businesses along West Jefferson Avenue.

At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, immigrants constituted a prominent and influential element of Detroit's population. They dominated the southwestern section of the city. As transplanted immigrants, they struggled to adjust to American urban life. Besides enduring economic hardship in the best of times, without the safety net of familial and neighborly support intrinsic to community life, they were especially vulnerable to financial setbacks.

The immigrants generally did not mix well with other groups, primarily due to language barriers, and it was common for them to establish their own churches, schools, shops and social centers (Hauk-Abonyi and Horvath-Monrreal 1975:5). These buildings set a social standard for the different ethnic enclaves, offering them a place to meet for their amusements, to celebrate holidays and other special days in the Old Country manner, to form athletic associations and teams, to form musical or dramatic clubs, and to offer English, sewing, millinery, and cooking classes. Local community centers or neighborhood houses often offered immigrants free English classes where they learned about American culture and the scientific care of their home and children. Some of the local theaters often showed native films. And finally, once one had passed on, they often went to a specific ethnic undertaker and were buried in the nearby cemeteries (BHC 2006).

Even after it was annexed to Detroit, Delray had a close community feeling that remained well into the late twentieth century. At its height, one never had to leave Delray. It was a neighborhood, even if it reeked with odors from soapmaking, animal fat rendering, and waste plants. People lived, worked, ate, and shopped there (Lowry 2004). They worked at one of the many industries lining the Detroit River or at one of the auto and steel factories located nearby. They rented a residence (until they saved enough money to purchase it), and either walked or took the streetcar to work. They shopped at the grocery stores on West Jefferson Avenue, Dearborn Street, and West End Avenue, frequented the local theaters, and the bars and

restaurants, bakeries, and meat markets that provided native specialties. They went to church there, often helping to build the ethnic church where they could hear services in their native language. They sent their children to one of the many local schools (Scott 2001).

The population of Delray reached its peak in the 1930s, at 23,617 (Scott 2001). By the 1940s, the automobile and attractiveness of the suburbs precipitated the declining population. Those who could afford it, moved out of Delray. The number of companies, and consequently the population of the neighborhood, declined. The war effort during World War II temporarily revitalized some of the industrial base of the neighborhood. Foundries, metal-working shops, and machine factories provided essential services for the war effort, but some industries continued down-sizing and relocating elsewhere, or closed entirely. With fewer opportunities for employment, residents left the neighborhood, and the area subsequently was a product of suburban flight.

By the 1950s, the population of Delray had dropped to 17,753 (Scott 2001). The attraction of jobs and cheap land, together with concerns about crime, the quality of schools, and declining property values, made the suburbs attractive throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The adoption of Detroit's master plans in 1955 and 1963 were also major factors in the depopulation of the neighborhood. The plans outlined broad, sweeping changes that focused, in part, on the creation of new land use patterns, the division of residential and industrial areas, and an enhanced transportation system, including the construction of the Fisher Freeway (I-75) (Scott 2001). The path of this highway skimmed the northern edge of Delray, and although it did not result in the widespread demolition of Delray buildings, it did divert people away from neighborhood business districts and industries.

With the coming of the freeways and suburban growth, shifting job markets and social upheaval (such as the Detroit riots in 1967), the population of Delray continued to drop during the 1960s. In just about 30 years, the population of Delray had dwindled from 23,617 people in the 1930s to just 13,581 people in the 1960s (Scott 2001). More industrial zoning and factory development further isolated the population (Lowry 2004; Scott 2001). By the 1970s, only 9,797 people called Delray home (Scott 2001). It was during the 1970s and 1980s that deterioration reached new heights in Delray. By then, the Detroit Water Board expansion practically wiped out the Polish community, which was forced to relocate. The development would become one of the largest wastewater disposal and treatment plants in the country (Scott 2001).

While it has never recovered the population levels enjoyed in the early twentieth century, Delray presently has a stable industrial base, and it remains the home of nationally known companies such as Great Lakes Steel, Yellow Trucking, and the Lafarge Detroit Cement Terminal. Lafarge was located here in 2005 to allow redevelopment of their former east riverfront site by the city. Like many other communities in the Rust Belt, Delray has been economically hit hard by a general decline in manufacturing, factory closings, and freeway construction; however, it continues to endure as a city neighborhood in the midst of big industry. But with each passing day, there is less and less to hint at the long history of the neighborhood as a vital area that generations of people knew and loved as home (Scott 2001).

#### Resources of the Proposed Delray Community Historic District

The Delray Community Historic District is the most intact geographical area of Delray. Likewise, the educational, social/ethnic, commercial, religious and residential buildings comprising the district are the best representation of what it may have been like to be a resident of Delray in the early twentieth century. The following text describes each of the five resource

types found within the Delray Community Historic District, as well as extant buildings associated with them.

### *Educational Buildings*

The James McMillan School, located at 615 South West End Avenue, was the earliest constructed school in the district (Figure 3.2.2-14).<sup>3-2</sup> Out of two schools originally constructed in the district, it is the only one extant. Named for local area businessman, philanthropist, and U.S. Senator, James McMillan, the two-story, 16-room brick building was designed by the architectural firm of Malcomson and Higginbotham and served from 1916 to 2001 as a school providing educational needs for the area's elementary age children (Ross 2001:9A).

The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia School was once located at 8419 Vanderbilt Street. Although the building is still standing (it currently houses the Sweet Communion Baptist Church [Figure 3.2.2-15]), the school is no longer in operation at this location. First indicated on a 1923 Sanborn Map, the school was associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Church, located nearby at 8400 Vanderbilt Street (now the home of the True Light Church of God in Christ) (Sanborn Map Company 1923). Both the church and school were formed in 1901 as daughter organizations of the much larger Zion Lutheran Church of Detroit (Zion Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Detroit 2007); however, they occupied their respective locations in the district for only for a short period. By 1951, the building at 8419 was a clubhouse, and the church at 8400 housed the First Hungarian Baptist Church (Sanborn Map Company 1951).

### *Social/Ethnic Buildings*

Historically, a number of social/ethnic clubs were located in Delray; however, only two known buildings associated with the social/ethnic history of Delray are located inside the boundaries of the district. Both resources are associated with the social/ethnic history of the Hungarians. The Detroit First Szekely-Magyar Association was at one time located at 8020 Thaddeus Street (Wayne State University 1951:25). The organization was likely located here in association with the Free Magyar Reformed Church, also formerly at this location. Presently, the building is the home of the Solvay Church of God in Christ (Figure 3.2.2-16). The second social/ethnic club once located in the district was the Bridgeport Association Lodge #14. This Hungarian benefit society was formerly located at 608-610 West End Street (Wayne State University 1951:25). This building is still extant, although it is currently vacant (Figure 3.2.2-17). The Louis Kossuth Society, another Hungarian social/ethnic organization, is believed to have once been located in the district at the intersection of West End Street and Vanderbilt Street, although its exact address remains unknown. There are currently no buildings at this intersection (Wayne State University 1951:25).

### *Commercial Buildings*

Almost all of the commercial businesses located in the district were small, family-owned establishments like grocery stores and meat markets. Grocery stores sold canned foods, baked goods and dairy products, while meat markets, or butcher shops, sold meat and cold cuts. Lowry

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<sup>3-2</sup>As of January 2008, the James McMillan School had been gutted by fire. The roof was no longer visible, though the majority of the school's exterior walls were still standing. Despite some portions of the building remaining intact, McMillan no longer retains sufficient integrity to be considered a historic resource and therefore is no longer considered contributing to the Delray Community Historic District.