

## PROPOSED WEST VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

### FINAL REPORT

West Village is a late-nineteenth/early twentieth century residential area occupying about 20 square blocks on the east side of Detroit approximately three miles up the Detroit River from the central business district. To the east of West Village is the Indian Village Historic District, to the west is an older Victorian residential neighborhood, to the north across Kercheval is the Butzel Family Center, a modern social service complex, and to the south across Jefferson Avenue are the apartment buildings of the "East Riverfront" and the U.A.W. International World Headquarters. West Village is comprised of approximately 275 two-story single and two-family houses, 30 apartment buildings, and about 20 commercial buildings. The great majority of the buildings were constructed between 1890 and 1920, on what, up to that time, had been open farmland. It is now a racially integrated, mixed-income-level neighborhood with a population of about 3,190.

**BOUNDARIES:** The boundaries of the proposed district are outlined in black on the attached map and are as follows:

*Beginning at the intersection of the centerline of East Jefferson Avenue with the western boundary of the Park Subdivision of the Cook Farm (L19/P59), and proceeding northerly along the western boundary of the Park Subdivision to the point where it meets the western boundary of the Assessor's Plat of the Addition to Park Subdivision of the Cook Farm (L66/P55) and proceeding northerly along the western boundary of the Assessor's Plat to its intersection with the centerline of Kercheval; thence westerly along the centerline of Kercheval to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between Seyburn and Baldwin; thence southerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of Van Dyke Place extended westward; thence east along said centerline to its intersection with the western boundary of the alley between Seyburn and Van Dyke; thence southerly along said western boundary to its intersection with the centerline of the alley between Van Dyke Place and Jefferson; thence easterly along said centerline to the boundary between Lots 50 and 51 of the Charles Bewick's Subdivision of the Subdivision of Lots 82, 83 and 84 of the Van Dyke Farm (L21/P39) extended north; thence southerly along said boundary to its intersection with the centerline of East Jefferson Avenue; thence easterly to the point of beginning.*

**HISTORY:** The West Village neighborhood is of historical importance as a benchmark to the growth of Detroit in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and as the home of a number of prominent Detroit residents, some of whom achieved national note.

West Village received its name in the mid-twentieth century in recognition of its location adjacent to the western edge of its more famous neighbor, Indian Village. Indian Village, which was built on a more opulent scale slightly later than West Village, was listed in

the National Register in 1972. The difference between the two neighborhoods lies primarily in the size of the lots and the restrictive covenants that guaranteed the exclusive character of Indian Village. West Village not only has different physical characteristics than Indian Village in that it is more densely built-up and the lots are smaller, but, unlike its neighbor, it has always sheltered a variety of social classes ranging from factory workers and artisans to millionaires.

West Village was originally part of Hamtramck Township until 1891, when Baldwin Avenue ceased to be the city limits. Private Claim 100 was granted to Julian and Harriet Hamtramck by the United States government in 1811 and Private Claim 679 was confirmed to Antoine Chapoton in 1810. These two contiguous tracts were purchased by James A. Van Dyke for \$8,000 in 1846 and were thenceforth known as the Van Dyke Farm. James A. Van Dyke, a prominent Detroit citizen, served as mayor of Detroit in 1847. This farm ran east/west from approximately Shipherd Street to the alley between Parker and Seminole and stretched approximately three miles north from the Detroit River. Private Claim 38, from Baldwin to Shipherd, was confirmed to the heirs of Antoine Moras in 1807 and became known as the Wesson Farm, after the landholder and state senator W. B. Wesson.

Part of the Van Dyke Farm, from Mack to Jefferson, was subdivided by the Van Dyke heirs after his death into Lots 37-84 in 1865. Van Dyke Avenue was the only north/south street opened from Jefferson in 1885 in what was to become known as the West Village neighborhood. A few houses were built on the Van Dyke Farm before it was divided into house lots. By 1885, Van Dyke Street was already established with a small mixed-use community surrounding it.

Platting began in West Village in 1876 when Messrs. Coe, Denham and Shipherd subdivided a portion of the old Van Dyke Farm. This initial platting included the area now generally bounded by Agnes, Van Dyke, St. Paul, and Parker Avenues; however, in 1876 the eastern boundary was the Detroit Driving Club's race course, the western boundary was Van Dyke, the southern boundary was the old Parker, later changed to Tont and later vacated, and the northern boundary was Florine, later changed to St. Paul. In that same year, 1876, Coe Street appeared in records and on maps, named after S. S. Coe, landowner. A scattering of frame houses appeared on the 30' X 160' lots prior to 1885.

In the 1890s modest Victorian cottages began to appear in greater numbers as platting continued in earnest as the old Van Dyke Farm and Wesson Farm were further subdivided into house lots. Typical of these are the houses on Van Dyke between Agnes and Coe. By the mid-1890s an adequate system of streets and alleys had been established. However, a dilemma arose when Seyburn Street in Wesson's Subdivision was platted, transforming Shipherd into an alley. Consequently, a series of north/south blocks became defined on two sides by alleys. Dwelling houses were built facing the garages of homes built on Seyburn Street, resulting in an unusual situation not often found elsewhere in Detroit. This uncommon arrangement of streets and alleys

was conducive to a unique housing experiment undertaken in 1909 on Shipherd near Lafayette, called Shipherd Court. A cluster of single family houses faced a courtyard instead of the alley. Only one six-unit cluster was actualized; the rest of Shipherd was developed with single family homes and light manufacturing facilities fronting on Shipherd, the alley.

Some of the subdivisions platted in the mid-1890s were replatted at the turn of the century, such as Parker's Re-sub, first platted in 1895 and replatted in 1902, and Bewick's Sub, first platted in 1895 and replatted in 1899. The sale of house lots proceeded with greater success as a result of the establishment of land companies. After the turn of the century, construction became more substantial as larger and more expensive houses were built. The house at 724 Seyburn, one of the first large houses built in West Village, was followed within a few years by entire blocks of fine houses such as those on the first two blocks of Parker. One manifestation of West Village's increasing appeal to the affluent was the replatting of an older, unsuccessful subdivision which included the section of Parker Avenue between Jefferson and Lafayette into a boulevard with lots facing a 44' X 370' landscaped median, deeded to the city in 1902 by the Parker Estate Company Ltd. as an "ornamental ground." This section of Parker was soon built up with fashionable and expensive houses, similar to those in neighboring Indian Village.

In general, the house lots above (north of) Lafayette, with the exception being in Parker's Re-sub, are 30'-35' wide. Although the lots sizes in Shipherd's Sub were 60' X 165', the lots were often sold by half-lots, resulting in a width of 30'. Between Lafayette and Jefferson are lots 40' to 50' wide, depending on the particular subdivision. Within each block or each street face, most subdivisions imposed restrictions that were filed with individual deeds. For example, on Van Dyke Place, which is in Bewick's Subdivision, "no apartment building or no building except single or double residence, excluding necessary outbuildings,.... shall be erected, and shall not cost less than \$3,500 and shall not be placed less than 20' from the front lot line." The Parker Estate Company Ltd., established in 1901, sold lots with restrictions attached that specifically stated that, among other more ordinary things, "no liquors shall be manufactured or sold on said premises...." More commonly restricted throughout West Village was the cost of the structure, its use, its setback from front lot line and sometimes side lot line if it was a corner lot, and sometimes height.

Jefferson Avenue, the "Queen" of Detroit's thoroughfares, was more exclusive. Only single dwelling houses were permissible and the required minimum cost of construction was prohibitive. An agreement was drawn up between the owners of the Bewick Subdivision and Wesson's Subdivision to establish mutually desirable restrictions on their adjacent Jefferson Avenue frontage. Only single family dwelling houses costing not less than \$10,000 each and placed within 35' of the front lot line were permitted to be built. Therefore, the north side of the Jefferson Avenue frontage never developed as anticipated. A mixed-use strip grew up across from the grand mansions, later

replaced by tall apartment buildings, on the south side of Jefferson Avenue.

The entire West Village neighborhood built-up rapidly between 1905 and 1925 with fine middle-class homes, apartment buildings and row-house blocks. A neighborhood commercial strip grew up on Kercheval Avenue.

During the decades from 1920 to 1950 West Village enjoyed a period of prosperous maturity. It was home to a number of prominent Detroiters including numerous merchants, business executives and professionals. Among the more prominent were Franz Kuhn, Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court and president of the Michigan State Telephone Company; Edwin Denby, Secretary of the Navy during the administrations of Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge; Theodore Hinchman, president of the nationally known Detroit-based architecture firm of Smith, Hinchman and Grylls; and Julius Melchers, a nationally known late-nineteenth century sculptor and woodcarver.

In the post war years as racial tensions accelerated the flight to the suburbs, West Village, like other inner city residential areas in Detroit, slowly began to decline. Absentee landlordism and deferred maintenance took their toll on the housing stock and abandonment and spot demolition spread into the neighborhood from the blighted area to the west.

By the early 1970s West Village seemed doomed as a viable middle class residential area. The resurgence of its fashionable neighbor, Indian Village, however, generated new interest in the still attractive eastern portion of West Village around Parker and Lafayette Avenues. On the west side of the neighborhood the residents of Seyburn Street organized a strong block club to preserve that street's integrity in the face of encroaching blight. The new homeowners, who were attracted to the area by the excellent housing opportunity and the proximity to downtown, joined with the corp of longtime residents to form the West Village Association in 1974. This organization is dedicated to arresting decay, developing a renewed community spirit and aiding residents in dealing with individual needs.

Today West Village is enjoying a renaissance in residential popularity. Decay is being successfully combatted and houses are being rehabilitated throughout the area. The neighborhood is one of several in Detroit where a racially integrated population is working together to maintain a viable integrated living environment.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** West Village is laid out on an irregular grid plan with the major streets extending north to Kercheval intersected by minor east-west streets. Parker, Van Dyke, Seyburn and Lafayette are the principal streets. The neighborhood is honey-combed with a network of service alleys and short, narrow cross streets. The buildings are uniformly set back from the curb behind small front lawns, and most are centered on their narrow lots. Although many of the streetside trees have been lost, the building lots are well-landscaped with mature shrubs and trees giving a parklike character to the neighborhood.

West Village contains a great variety of dwelling types representing the full range of housing concepts popular in the period from 1850 to 1930. The neighborhood has always sheltered a mixture of income groups with the result that there are modest frame workers' cottages, two-family houses, commodious middle-class single-family dwellings, spacious upper-class mansions, terrace houses and various types of apartment buildings. In addition, there are neighborhood commercial strips on Jefferson and Kercheval, and a few churches spotted throughout the area.

The earliest single-family houses include rows of frame Victorian cottages originally occupied by the working class, such as those on Van Dyke between Agnes and Coe, and more substantial frame two-story Queen Anne dwellings. Both types were built by builders, carpenters, or contractors. Larger middle-class houses, mostly brick, two-story dwellings, representing a variety of architectural styles popular after the turn-of-the-century, comprise the majority of the housing stock. These range in style from plain, brick blocks exhibiting prairie and bungalow influences to Tudor, Colonial Revival, castellated, Dutch Colonial and Mediterranean designs.

The upper class dwellings are mostly located on or near Jefferson Avenue, which was one of Detroit's most exclusive residential thoroughfares at the turn-of-the-century. There are Mediterranean influenced structures, such as the c. 1900 Finck House at 649 Van Dyke, as well as examples of the more popular Tudor style, such as the house at 8115 Jefferson, built in 1902, or variations on the Colonial Revival style as exemplified by the 1912 Colby House at 714 Parker designed by Albert Kahn. One of the more original houses in the neighborhood is the Dutch Mannerist style house at 1050 Parker.

One of the most interesting aspects of West Village's building stock is the range of multi-family dwelling types it contains. There are excellently designed blocks of terrace houses such as the stuccoed English Cottage style houses at 8005-29 St. Paul built about 1912-13, the brick and wood shingle Jacobean influenced block at 8109-27 Lafayette built in 1906, and the brick Georgian Revival style row at 8040-60 St. Paul completed in 1918. Like many of the upper-class single-family houses, the terrace rows are patterned after contemporary English models. An interesting development exhibiting what was an unusual planning concept for Detroit in the early twentieth

century, are the six identical, stucco houses at 1020-1034 Shipherd Court built in 1909 around a central, communal garden space. Duplexes were also popular in the period before World War I. Number 7946-7950 Lafayette and 711-715 Seyburn Street are fairly typical.

Middle-class apartment living first made its appearance in Detroit in the form of two-family houses. There are quite an array of these in West Village, of which 1011-15 and 1057-61 Van Dyke are the most common type. Within a few years, three and four unit buildings appeared, heralding the emergence of the full-fledged apartment building. In order to harmonize with the prevailing neighborhood fabric these structures were often designed to resemble large single-family houses. One of the finest examples is 1030 Van Dyke, built in 1921. Number 648 Van Dyke and 715-21 Parker are more typical of West Village's small apartment buildings.

Among the earliest large luxury apartment buildings in Detroit is the Colonial at 1005 Parker built in 1901. The compact mass of this three-story Colonial Revival style structure was designed to blend inobtrusively into the neighborhood amidst its well landscaped grounds, while the colossal Ionic portico added a monumental note of opulence not at all out of character with the nearby Jefferson Avenue mansions being constructed about the same time.

The domestic scale represented by the Colonial gave way in the 1920s to the modern apartment building. The few examples are mostly located on Van Dyke Avenue, the principal street in West Village, which was redeveloped in the 1920s to accommodate the city-wide boom in apartment building construction. The buildings are all four- to six-stories in height and were designed to harmonize with existing neighborhood fabric. They range in style from Tudor (No. 1720), to Georgian (No. 1099), to Prairie style (No. 1121), to Mozarabic (No. 1000). An exception to the general trend to maintain the residential scale of the streetscapes is the Parkstone Apartments, a hulking, square, brick, Georgian style, eleven-story building at the corner of Parker and Agnes.

As for non-residential buildings, in addition to commercial buildings, there is only one church of significance; it is a Tudor Gothic style brick structure with limestone trim built in 1916. The major decorative feature of this otherwise rather plain structure is the crenelated corner tower containing the carved limestone entrance. Located at 7835 Lafayette, the building is now used as the Zion Progress Baptist Church.

The commercial buildings are limited to neighborhood shopping areas located on Kercheval Avenue between Van Dyke and Parker and on Agnes between Van Dyke and Parker. They were first built-up with small commercial buildings in the World War I era. Both the Agnes and Kercheval strips still present a period appearance, although there has been some spot demolition on Kercheval. Jefferson, which was originally a residential street, has been slowly rebuilt with modern buildings in a piecemeal fashion so that it does not present an architecturally unified appearance, although there are some individually excellent structures. Perhaps the two most distinguished commercial structures in West Village are the former Guardian Detroit Bank at 7875-77 East Jefferson, a limestone Romanesque style structure built in 1927 and the former Detroit Savings Bank at 7968 Kercheval, a two-story, limestone, Classical style building built in 1918. The rest of the commercial buildings are fairly similar, two-story, brick buildings with bay windows at the second floor apartment level above the plain wood and plate glass store fronts.

Relatively little development occurred in the area after 1925 with the result that there are few intrusive structures, with the exception of a few apartment buildings and houses built in the 1950s and 1960s and some modern commercial buildings on Jefferson Avenue.

1. Melchers House, 723 Seyburn, 1897, Donaldson & Meier (architects)

The design for the Melchers House was commissioned by Gari Melchers in 1897 as a gift to his father, Julius Theodore Melchers. Julius Theodore Melchers (1830-1908), the first occupant of the house, was a sculptor, modeler, and carver of some renown. Among his creations were the state coat of arms placed over the main entrance of the Michigan Centennial Building in Philadelphia in 1876 and the statues of Detroit pioneers at the old Detroit City Hall in 1871, now at Wayne State University. Melchers' son Gari, also an accomplished artist, studied in Germany and France as well as the United States. He resided in the house after his father's death until it was sold in 1915.

The Melchers House finds its Colonial precedent in the Medieval of the seventeenth century, with Dutch influence as evident in the gables, shutters, and slight kick of the roof eave. A dormer with projecting triangular gables protrudes from the steeply pitched roof on either side of the central gabled dormer. The carving of the gable of the large central dormer is the work of Julius Melchers. Another interesting Colonial characteristic is that of the slight projection of the second story over the first. The firm of Donaldson & Meier were the architects of this handsome building, Donaldson having been a friend of Melcher. Gari Melchers brought back tiles from one of his trips to Holland for the mantels inside the house.

2. Shipherd Court, 1020-34 Shipherd Court, 1909, Vinton Company

The six single-family houses forming a courtyard off of Shipherd are the result of an unusual planning concept in the early-twentieth century. The six identical stucco houses were built by the Vinton Company for Charles Bewick, of Bewick Realty Company, incorporated in 1906 for the purpose of selling house lots in Bewick's Subdivision. The six houses are identical in detail; each is two-stories in height with large windows and wide overhanging roofs. Shipherd Court represents a unique example of urban planning in Detroit; the residences were planned with a central communal garden space.

3. Duplex, 7831-35 Van Dyke Place, 1906, John Seestedt (builder)

A preponderance of two-family houses were built in West Village in the early twentieth century; the property restrictions filed with the original deeds specifically allowed for their construction. The majority of structures on Van Dyke Place, originally Richard Street, were built as two-family units, either in the form of flats or duplexes. The duplex at 7831-35 Van Dyke Place typifies this housing phenomenon.

Built by John Seestedt, carpenter, in 1906, this two-story brick duplex housed middle-class families throughout its lifetime. The first occupants were, at 15 Van Dyke Place, J. Remsen Bishop, principle of Eastern High School, and at 17 Van Dyke Place, Peter B. Luyster, vice-president of Houghten-French Company, suppliers of lake ice.

It is a typical example of a Colonial Revival double-residence with a recessed entrance on each side and a two-story bay window crowned with a gable in the center. The Doric columned porches bear typical Colonial Revival detail. Overhanging eaves of the hip roof of the building form the ceilings of the second story porches.

4. Finck House, 649 Van Dyke, 1900, George D. Mason (architect)

The Finck estate is easily one of the most unusual homes in West Village, and its builder, William Muir Finck, one of the more colorful figures in the history of industrial Detroit. Born in Lyons, New York, Finck moved to Detroit in 1854. As a young man of 20, he went to work in the firm of C. R. Mably and Company, manufacturers of overalls and work clothes. Several years later, Finck was joined in Detroit by his uncle, Charles Fitzsimmons, and together they formed the Fitzsimmons-Finck Overall Company. In 1901, Finck withdrew from the partnership and formed his own company, which, at his death in 1936 was one of the largest industries of its kind in the country. The rapid development of the automobile and related industries in Detroit and the subsequent demand for thousands of work uniforms contributed to Finck's success.

The man himself proved to be an able executive. He was years ahead of his time in labor/management relations and factory innovations. His plant was the first to provide rest and recreation rooms for its employees as well as its own restaurant. In a more eccentric vein, he was also ahead of his time in that he was a vegetarian and health food faddist who kept his own grinding mill in his office and, over several years, gave away literally tons of grain to anyone who would try his diet. He continuously espoused the virtues of abstinence from water because of its impurities. He died suddenly at age 92, alert and vibrant to the end. He left no immediate family. His wife, Katherine Rheiner, whom he had married in Buffalo, New York, in 1899, died in 1919. They had no children and Finck never remarried. He had been a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, Sons of the Colonial Wars, the Detroit Athletic Club and the Detroit Boat Club. Furthermore, he was a prominent early patron of the Detroit Institute of Arts. The Finck house was subsequently occupied by his niece, Mrs. Harry McQueen, who lived there until 1963. The house was then sold to clothing designer Ruth Joyce, and served as her boutique until her death in 1970.

Currently operating in the building is the elegant French restaurant, "The Van Dyke Place."

According to a magazine article appearing in Town and Country in 1912, "Rarely outside of Paris itself does one find a more perfect type of pure French house than in the residence of Mr. William Muir Finck at Detroit, Michigan." The building, designed by prominent Detroit architect George D. Mason, reflects, in fact, a combination of architectural styles. The Mediterranean flavor is expressed in the glazed tile roof; the Louis Seize French is expressed in the delicate entrance surrounds and French doors, and the twentieth century expressed in its Edwardian boxy massing. The Finck residence is faced with light-glazed brick; limestone window and door surrounds are featured in the central entrance bay. The entablature over the doorway supports a second story balcony. Beneath the overhanging roof eaves are ocular windows.

This main facade, facing Van Dyke, is symmetrically arranged, with the entrance as the central axis. The main feature of the south facade is the two-storied bowed window capped by a steep conical roof, which faces a ballustraded porch. The south elevation contains a small glass conservatory. An extensive service quarters extended back from the main block of the house and was later joined to the carriage house in the rear.

The interior of the Finck House was lavishly furnished in the style of Louis Seize. Blue and white were the prevailing colors used by the decorator, Mr. John H. Huttaff of New York. A painting by the French Rococo artist Watteau was reproduced in hand painted glass for the staircase window. A French garden completed the sense of unity between the interior and the exterior of the Finck House, which remains relatively unaltered to this day.

5. Van Dyke Manor, 1000 Van Dyke, 1923, J.I. Weinberg (architect)

Van Dyke Manor represents one of the many moderate size apartment buildings in West Village. Apartment buildings of this scale dressed in a variety of historical styles were being constructed throughout Detroit in the late 1910s and 1920s, the most notable collection being the early buildings in Palmer Park. Built at an estimated cost of \$177,000 in 1923, Van Dyke Manor is six stories high and contains 37 apartment units.

The style of Van Dyke Manor reflects modern apartment building construction with pilaster type mullions between the windows and spandrels beneath them, and medieval Spanish, or Mozarabic, references. The term Mozarabic refers to the use of elements of Mohammedan and Christian architecture in combination, as popular in the architecture of eighth century Spain. The results of this on Van Dyke Manor are the twisted columns, an Early Christian motif, coupled with the typically Islamic arcading and tower with slightly pitched frontal gable with a niche within on the southern end of the facade. Its roof is tiled, adding to the Mediterranean influence. The product is a 1920s building with interest added through the use of historical detail, concentrated in the entrance bay and the southernmost bay, the latter being prominently situated on the corner of Van Dyke and Lafayette.

6. James Smith House, 1421 Van Dyke, c. 1883

The James Smith House predated the division of the majority of the Van Dyke subdivision into house lots. It is on the north half of Lot 45 of Shipherd's Subdivision of part of the Van Dyke Farm, platted in 1890. James Smith, according to city directories, lived on the west side of Van Dyke as early as 1883 but did not purchase Lot 45 from Messrs. Coe, Denham, Dewey, et.al. until 1886. At that time Smith was a shoemaker with the firm of Pingree and Smith, manufacturers of shoes and boots. In the mid-1890s James Smith appeared in city directories as a grocer, and possibly lived above the store he had built next door at 1417 Van Dyke while leasing out the house at 1421 Van Dyke. The Smith's sold Lot 45 in 1928.

The Smith House is typical of small one and one-half story Victorian cottages found elsewhere in West Village dating from the 1880s and 1890s, but is special in that it is the only one that is brick. It is also a bit more elaborate than the frame workers cottages in the neighborhood, with its central bay window and colored glass in the subdivided transom lights. The recessed entrance porch is on the south side of the front elevation, a bay window sits below the transverse gable of the south elevation.

The Smith House is a fine example of a middle-class dwelling of the 1880s.

7. Termote House, 1433 Van Dyke, c. 1886

Charles Termote, teller at the Detroit Savings Bank, purchased Lot 44 on which this middle-class two-story Victorian house was built. The house is unusual in that it consists of a two-story bow window with continuous bands of sash windows within, and a gable above. The main body of the house is set back from the bow window and the entrance porch is on the south side of the front facade.

8. 8109 E. Jefferson, Frederick K. Stearns House

In the area around Indian Village are a number of houses which serve as reminders that Jefferson Avenue was heavily residential in that section. One of the most important of these is the Frederick K. Stearns house, designed in 1902 by the Detroit architects Stratton and Baldwin. Half-timbering of a medieval character covers a house actually built of hollow tile; the design impulse clearly comes from the Arts and Crafts movement. William Stratton later married Mary Chase Stratton, the founder of Detroit's Pewabic Pottery. The house interior is a showplace for Pewabic; surely no more complete and magnificent installations of this tile could be found in a residence.

Stearns was an important figure in Detroit history; the Stearns building at Jefferson and Bellevue being another reminder of the family business. Pharmaceutical manufacturing has been an important Detroit industry, and the Stearns firm played an important role in that industry in the early years of this century.

The Stearns house is now used as part of the Region 8 School Board offices.

9. 8115 E. Jefferson, Arthur M. Parker House

In 1901 the architects Malcomson & Higginbotham received a permit to construct a two-story brick dwelling for Arthur M. Parker, secretary-treasurer of the Detroit Range Boiler Company. Malcomson & Higginbotham were consultant architects for the Detroit public school system. After becoming partners in 1890, they designed Romanesque Revival churches in Detroit, and the initial buildings on the new campus of the University of Detroit at Livernois and McNichols.

Like the Frederick K. Stearns house next door, the Arthur M. Parker house is covered with half-timbering of an English medieval flavor above its brick first story.

The Arthur M. Parker house and the Stearns house are connected by modern additions and comprise part of the Region 8 School Board offices.

10. Colby House, 714 Parker, 1912, Albert Kahn (architect)

An imposing, Albert Kahn designed residence on a corner lot, 714 Parker was built in 1912 for Frederick L. Colby, the assistant secretary of Berry Brothers, Ltd. Colby was born in Michigan in 1862. In 1899 he married Frances Berry and subsequently became a purchasing agent for Berry Brothers, Varnish Manufacturing, Ltd. at the northwest corner of Lieb and Wight on the East Riverfront.

In 1913 he became Secretary of the Detroit Heating and Lighting Company and vice-president of the corporation the following year. He was also vice-president of Desmond Charcoal and Chemical Company. He was a member of the Detroit Athletic and Boat Clubs.

In 1915, the house was sold to Horace J. Caulkins, owner of the H. J. Caulkins and Company and the very important Detroit-based Pewabic Pottery Company.

The Caulkins Company which he founded manufactured china kilns and enamel furnaces. The Pewabic Pottery Company of which he was president provided hundreds of homes, businesses and churches with beautifully-glazed decorator tiles. Caulkins lavished his home with many fine examples of Pewabic pottery before his death in 1923. His wife is listed as living at the address until 1925.

The facade of the house at 714 Parker is of stucco on masonry accented by limestone sills on the first story and a belt course that unifies the second story windows for which it serves as one

continuous sill. The modestly-scaled entrance porch is composed of two Doric columns which support a shallow arched cover. The dentil cornice above the second floor runs the length of the building. The shallow hip roof with flat top is covered with tile; two dormers with projecting hip roofs protrude from the Parker Avenue slope. The formality of the front facade is contrasted with the informality of the north facade. A fine stuccoed garden wall to the rear is ornamented with Pewabic tile. The north elevation, facing the side street, is asymmetrical in composition, with the articulation of windows rising up service stairs, an oriel window, and secondary entrance.

11. The Colonial, 1005 Parker, 1901, S. C. Falkinburg (architect).

The Colonial represents the effective integration of a multiple unit building with a residential scale neighborhood. Samuel C. Falkinburg, the architect of the Colonial, also built other apartment buildings in Detroit, such as the Westminster Apartments on Westminster Avenue. The Colonial had six units above the basement, all initially occupied by professional men, such as William G. Smith, the treasurer of Berry Brothers, Ltd., manufacturers of varnishes and paints. Other well-known people resided there over the years; for instance, Fritz Goebel of Goebel Brewing Company and Maxwell Grylls, architect, lived at the Colonial in 1924.

The three-story luxury Colonial Revival apartment building is amply set back and landscaped on its corner lot. The entrance on the grey brick facade is dominated by the six fluted Ionic columns of a semi-circular portico with full entablature. The colossal portico serves the two-fold purpose of not only delineating the principal facade but also providing exterior porches for the units. The three stories are differentiated by a limestone string-course; the first story is rusticated. Each floor is fenestrated in a different manner; the first floor window transoms are excellent examples of early-twentieth century leaded and beveled glass; the second floor transoms are subdivided by wood muntins and mullions; the primary third floor windows have round-headed arches and small semi-circular windows rest above them. The resulting composition is symmetrical with diversity within.

12. Marie A. Palms House, 1050 Parker, 1914, W.F. Goodrich (architect)

Marie A. Palms, widow of Francis F. Palms and daughter-in-law of Francis Palms, one of the largest landowners and most prominent persons in commercial circles in Michigan, commissioned W.F. Goodrich to design this house at a cost of \$16,000 in 1914. Goodrich (1886-1946), born in Bay City, Michigan, was connected with the architectural practices of Clark and Munger, Albert Kahn, Smith, Hinchman and Grylls, and Gustave A. Mueller before he entered his own practice in 1911. In addition to residential commissions, Goodrich received the recommendation to design interiors of the cruise ship *North American* for the Great Lakes Engine Works at Ecorse. The resulting design of the house for Mrs. Palms is a one-of-a-kind in Detroit.

In form and massing, the stuccoed house is a tall, boxy building derived from Northern Baroque precedents, surmounted by a high double hip roof covered interne metal, with a finial at its peak. The central projecting broken gable culminates in side piers which are highlighted by inset glazed tile, reflective of the Arts and Crafts movement. The same brilliant glazed blue tiles also serve as a cap for the third floor rounded gable window. Casement windows are deeply inset, leaving a flush, smooth look to the exterior surface. The major influences on the design are European; one of the characteristics of the Arts and Crafts movement of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was the desire, in each country, to emphasize the national traditions of craft and design. In Germany and related countries, this took the form of a rather romantic style of architecture, which often married craft details to a more formal basic design. Thus, the resulting building at 1050 Parker Ave. has a symmetrically composed facade with expressionistic elements, such as the gable, and a delicate and spare application of Arts and Crafts tile towards the upper limits.

The house passed out of the Palms' family in 1943.

13. Parkstone Apartments, 1415 Parker at Agnes, 1925

The eleven-story Parkstone Apartments looms as the tallest building in West Village and serves as a focal point of the neighborhood. The Chippewa Apartment Company, owners of the Parkhurst Apartments kitty-cornered from the Parkstone at 1130 Parker, received a permit to construct an "apartment-hotel" on the north side of Agnes between Parker and Van Dyke on June 1, 1925 at an estimated cost of \$930,000. The Parkstone is of brick, tile, and reinforced concrete construction. The face brick is rough-cast and limestone quoins, sills, string courses and base accentuate this otherwise austere Georgian Revival building. Subtle ornamentation- the diamond patterned brick frieze, denticulation, and arcading-at the upper extremities of the building add interest to the facade.

The Parkstone Apartments, although out of scale with the houses around it, off sets the other large apartment building, the Parkhurst, and contributes to the urban residential scale of West Village through its off the street shops on Agnes.

14. 8040-60 St. Paul, 1916, Oscar C. Gottesleben (architect)

These five attached units were built a cost of \$22,000 in 1916. Modeled on English Georgian precedents, these townhouses are perhaps the most successful as an example of a low density type of architecture in Detroit, utilizing rough cast brick and limestone sills and belt courses. The group is unified by a continuous slate roof but, at the same time, each unit is given distinction by individual window and door treatments.

The first resident of the townhouse at 8040 St. Paul was the Honorable Franz Kuhn, Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court from 1912 to 1920. Kuhn was born to German immigrants in 1872 and was educated at the University of Michigan where he graduated with a bachelor of law degree in 1894. Kuhn served as the Circuit Court Commissioner for Macomb County from 1894 to 1896 and also as prosecuting attorney for the same county. In 1904 he was elected probate judge, in 1910 Attorney General for the State of Michigan, and in 1912, he was appointed Judge of the Michigan Supreme Court. In 1917 he became Chief Justice of that court.

Kuhn was president of the Michigan State Telephone Company, a member of the University Club, University of Michigan Club, Detroit Athletic Club and the Lochmoor Country and Detroit Boat Clubs.

15. Terraces, 8105-29 St. Paul, 1912

West Village possibly contains the best-designed collection of terraces and attached townhouses in Detroit. Designed to satisfy those desiring rental accommodations on a low-density residential scale, terrace rows were patterned after contemporary English models.

In 1912 Clara B. Arthur purchased the property, lots 25-27 of Hogg's Subdivision, and received two substantial mortgages shortly after that, resulting in the construction of this two and one-half story five unit stucco structure.

Units on either end of the terrace block project out from the main expanse of the block, with their transverse gables facing St. Paul, and, in effect, ground the building firmly on its graded landscaped site. Second and/or third stories of these end projections are pseudo-timbered and the first floor windows are sometimes banded together, evoking an English medieval flavor. The second story of the central expanse is sheathed in dark stained wood, combining its rustic look with that of the stucco and visually joining the end units together. The roof dormers, entrances, and stuccoed chimneys reinforce the English country ambience of the block.

16. 7821 Lafayette, Zion Progress Baptist Church, 1916

Established in 1825, the Presbyterian Church became the third Protestant denomination organized in Detroit. The Bethany Presbyterian Church of Detroit purchased the property, lots 10, 11, and 12 of Wesson's sub, in 1897 and proceeded to build a church structure. The Jefferson Ave. Presbyterian Church, purchased this property in 1925, but built their new church on the corner of Jefferson and Burns in Indian Village in the same year. It is possible that the two congregations merged around this time. In 1939 Jefferson Ave. Presbyterian sold the church to the First Church of the Brethren of Detroit, which had been occupying it since the late 1920s. They in turn sold it to the Holy Ghost Romanian Orthodox Church in 1952. The Zion Progress Baptist Church purchased it in 1977 and occupy it today.

Tudor Gothic in style, this brick edifice with limestone trim was built in 1916. The crenelated corner tower containing the carved limestone entrance is the main feature in this otherwise plain composition.

17. 1509 Parker

The building at 1509 Parker is actually a curious accumulation of buildings. The contracting firm of Paterson and Moore was the first listing to appear at this address in the city directory; in 1914, their business located on the rear of the lot and John Roe, a chauffeur, resided there. Paterson and Moore, general building contractors, were issued a building permit for the construction of a frame shop at an estimated cost of \$1000 on this property in early 1913. One part of the building was reputedly brought from Mack Ave. and was a duplicate of the original factory building in which Henry Ford built his Model T. At any rate, this wood structure is one of the few examples of residential and commercial buildings in West Village.

In the 1920s A. J. McCormick, cabinet maker, resided in this building and had his shop there also. A lumber shed was added in 1920. State Carpet Cleaning Works shared the premises with the carpentry shop. Continuing the pattern of mixed usage, the property was purchased in 1978 for use as an upholstery shop.

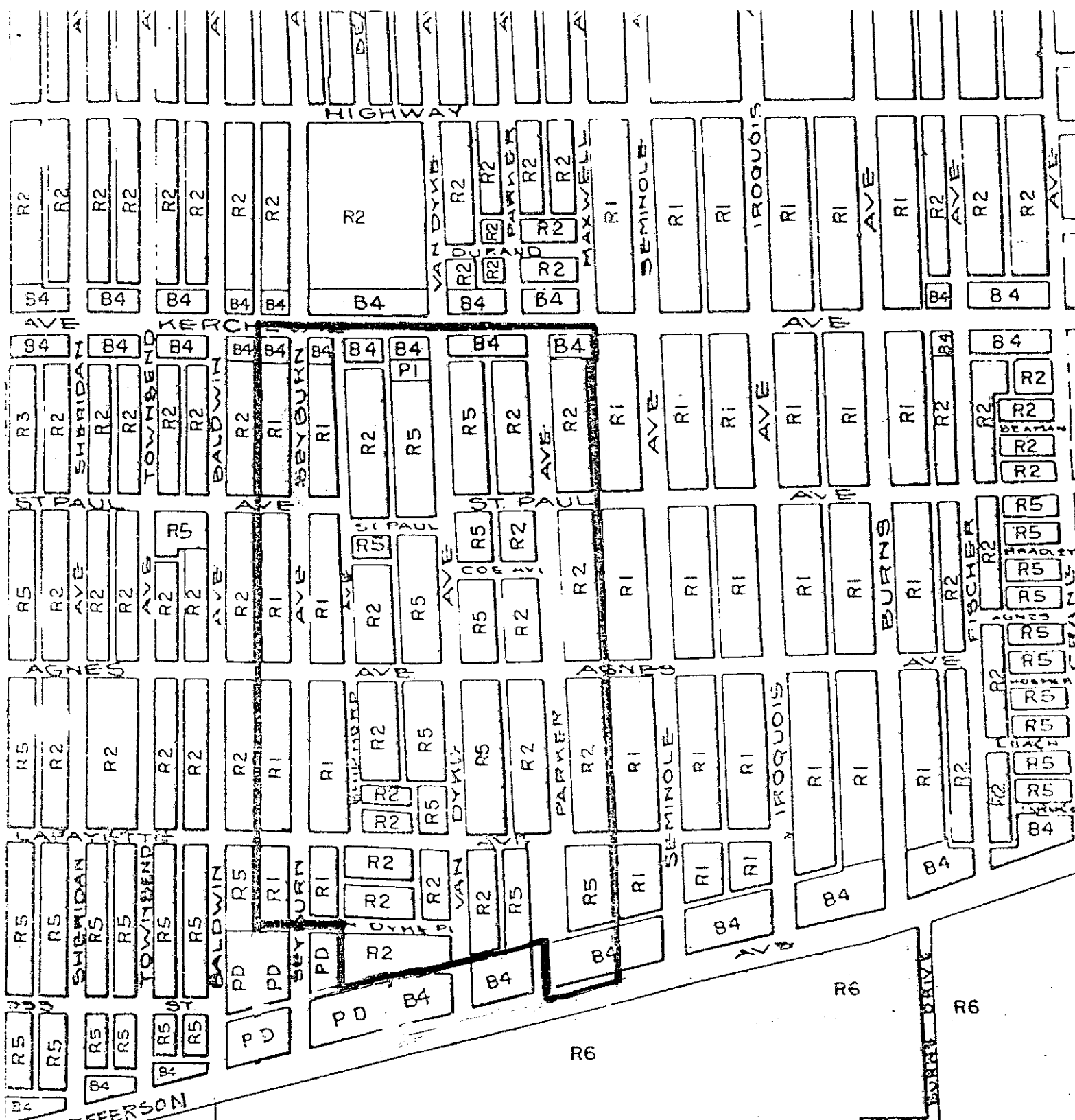
18. 8026 Kercheval, 1909, John Zimmerman (builder)  
8030 Kercheval, 1906, McIntyre and McIntyre (builders)

Kercheval was extended east of Baldwin after the turn of the century; the heirs of John Owens, owners of the frontage on the south side of Kercheval, sold the property in 1904. Commercial and resi-

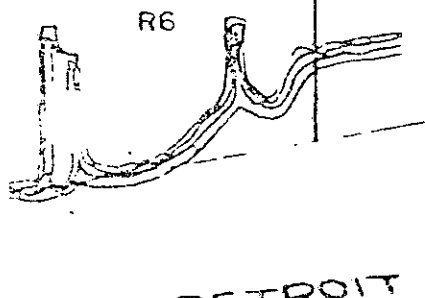
dential buildings were built on both sides of Kercheval. The commercial buildings served the neighborhoods which they abutted.

The commercial buildings at 8026 and 8030 Kercheval are representative of the many that existed prior to the demolition of similar blocks. They are brick, two stories tall with decorative cornices and perhaps bay windows at the second story apartment level above the plain wood and plate glass store fronts. 8026 Kercheval, now McRae Temple Baptist Church, was originally the bakery and home of Anthony F. Karl; 8030 Kercheval was a meat market.

RECOMMENDATION: The Historic Designation Advisory Board recommends that the City Council establish the West Village Historic District with the design treatment level of conservation. A draft ordinance for the establishment of the district is attached for consideration by the City Council

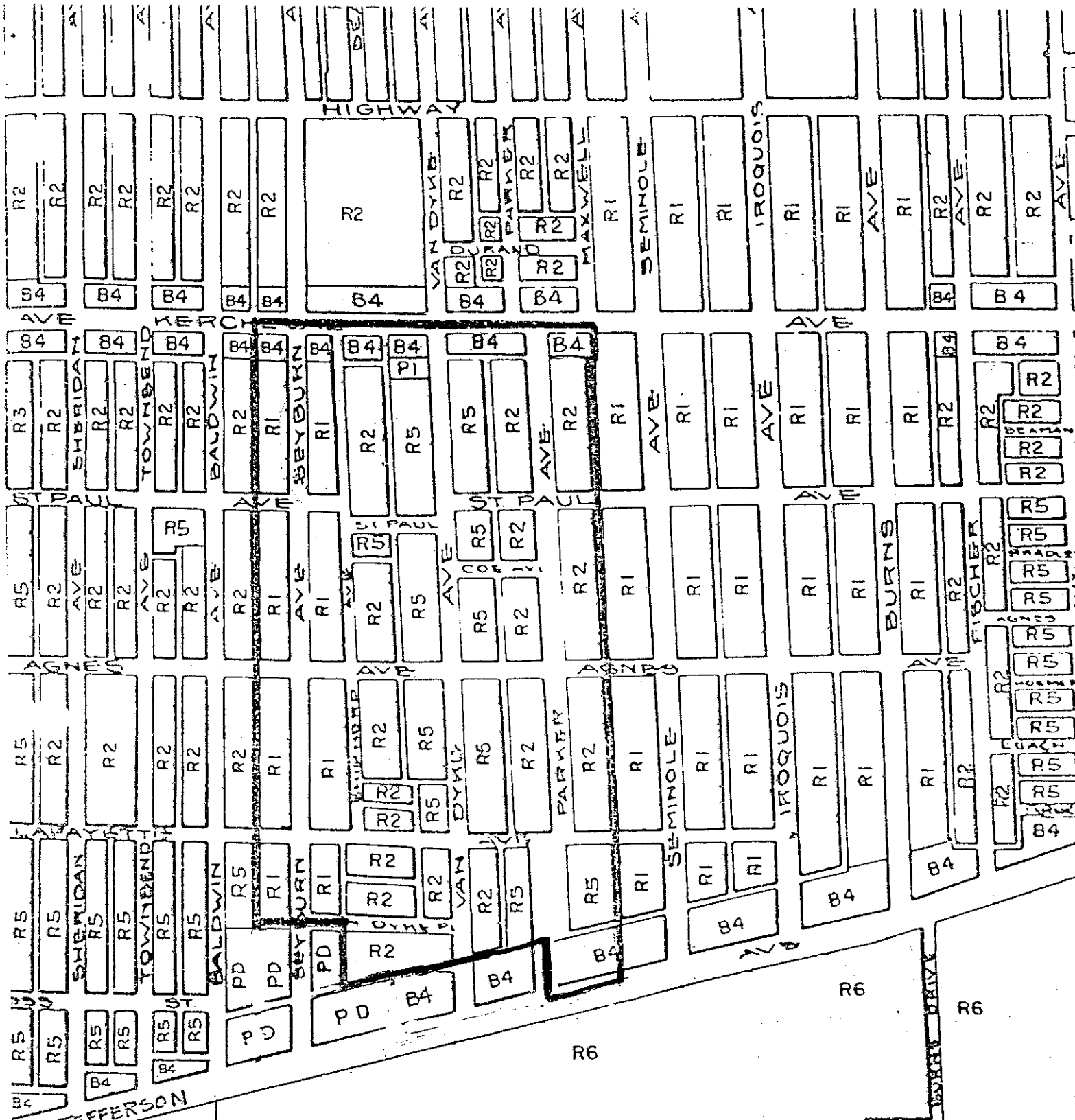


Proposed West Village Historic District  
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in heavy black lines)

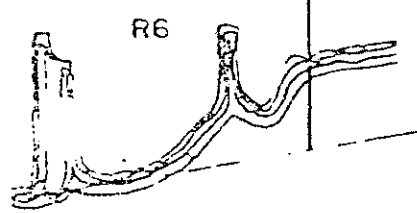


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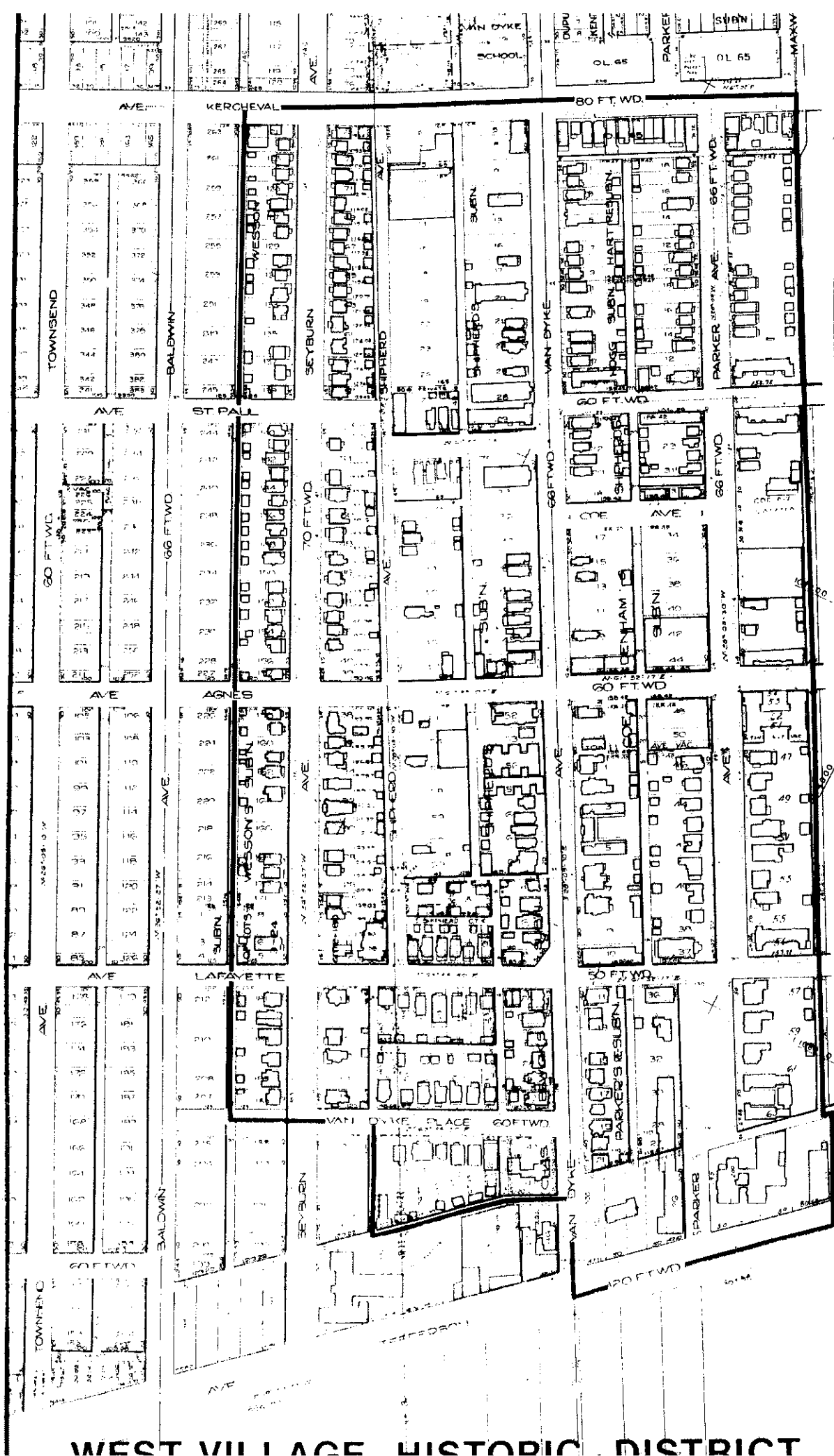


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DETROIT

RIVER



WEST VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT