

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Williamston Downtown Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number First blocks of East and West Grand River Avenue and South Putnam not for publication

Street

city or town Williamston vicinity

state Michigan code MI county Ingham code 065 zip code 48895

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

MI SHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
39	10	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
1		object
40	10	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade – Specialty Store

Commerce/Trade – Financial Institution

Commerce/Trade -- Restaurant

Commerce/Trade – Business

Government – City Hall

Domestic – Hotel

Social – Meeting Hall

Recreation & Culture – Theater

Commerce/Trade – Specialty Store

Commerce/Trade – Restaurant

Commerce/Trade – Business

Government – City Hall

Social – Meeting Hall

Recreation & Culture – Theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Italianate

Late Victorian

Commercial Brick

Moderne

International Style

foundation: Stone, Concrete

walls: Brick

Concrete Block

roof: Asphalt

other: Terra Cotta

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Williamston Downtown Historic District contains all the historic commercial buildings forming the core of the city's central business district. The district focuses on Williamston's central four-corner intersection of Grand River Avenue and Putnam Street and extends along part or all of the first blocks of those streets outward from that intersection. The district's buildings are commercial in character except for the city hall building. They date generally from the early 1870s to the 1950s. Italianate, Second Empire, Late Victorian, and Commercial Brick buildings predominate. The district contains forty-seven buildings, of which all but seven contribute to its historic character. The city's 1916 gray granite Civil War Monument, topped by a figure of a Union soldier at parade rest, stands in front of City Hall.

Narrative Description

The district is located in the center of the small city of Williamston, located about fifteen miles east-southeast of Lansing and eighty-five west-northwest of Detroit in the south-central part of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Its two streets, Grand River Avenue and Putnam Street, are also the main streets of the city. Grand River Avenue was once part of the main highway between Lansing and Detroit and is still an important thoroughfare despite I-96 paralleling it a few miles to the south. It runs generally in an east-southeast direction from Lansing toward Detroit, but makes a more northerly bend just west of Williamston's downtown and enters the district from the west running more east-northeast. In downtown Williamston it is four lanes wide, with parking on either side. At the intersection with the north-south-running Putnam Street, Grand River makes a pronounced turn and heads away from Putnam in an east-southeast alignment. Because of the bend at the central intersection, as you approach the intersection from either direction, building rows terminate the view. This gives Williamston's business district – the district – a visual character very different from the typical grid-plan downtown in which the road itself heading off into the distance provides the vista's central feature.

The district extends half to three-quarters of a long block along Grand River either way from the Putnam intersection and along the first full, but shorter, block along South Putnam south from the intersection down to the first cross street, Middle. Along North Putnam the district's north boundary is formed by the backs of the buildings along Grand River, except for one building on North Putnam's east side. Putnam is a two-lane road, with parking on either side – the narrower width gives the Putnam part of the district an intimate scale that adds much to this block's appeal as a pedestrian-friendly space. To the district's north is the Red Cedar River, a small west-flowing tributary of the Grand River that powered mills in the community's early days. Northeast and north across the river are residential neighborhoods. West of the district Grand River Avenue fronts newer commercial development, including a supermarket just to the west on the avenue's south side. To the district's south and east are older residential neighborhoods.

The district's buildings are one and two stories in height with the exception of three three-story buildings at and near the Grand River/Putnam intersection. Most have red brick walls, but there is one concrete block building and a number that have brick fronts but concrete block side and rear walls. A few frame buildings are also present. The buildings range in style from Italianate and Second Empire to Late Victorian to Commercial Brick and Moderne to post World War II simplified historicism and International Style in inspiration.

The district as a whole is visually dominated by its Victorian buildings. Four of the district's largest and most architecturally distinguished Victorian blocks mark the four corners of the Grand River/Putnam intersection. The 1874 Italianate Bowerman and Second Empire National Blocks, the district's two oldest documented buildings, stand near the southwest and northeast corners, respectively, the two-story Bowerman located one building west of the southwest corner and the

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two-story-plus-tall-mansard-roof National Block one building east of the northeast corner. The 1887 three-story three-storefront long Late Victorian Andrews Hotel, with its angled corner, stands at the northwest corner, the equally massive 1899 Leasia Building, with its rounded corner and elaborate corbelled and paneled upper façade brickwork, at the southeast corner. Additional intact single-storefront wide brick Late Victorian buildings with bracketed cornices, storefront ironwork, and other historic details such as molded brick or terra cotta appear along South Putnam and on Grand River near the intersection.

The district's buildings also represent a broad range of vernacular commercial architecture of the first half of the twentieth century. There is a rockfaced concrete block store building; several examples of the Commercial Brick idiom typical of early twentieth-century downtowns in Michigan and seemingly everywhere else; the Sun Theater with its bright-hued enameled metal panel Moderne front; and buildings and aluminum-trimmed storefronts that bear the stripped-down influence of the International Style. Most buildings are relatively modest in size and simple and straightforward in design.

The following is an inventory of the district's buildings (all are commercial buildings and all contributing unless otherwise stated). Buildings on the north side of Grand River Avenue are listed first, west from the corner first and then east from the corner. The south side of Grand River follows, then N. Putnam's east side, followed by S. Putnam's east side, finally S. Putnam's west side.

West Grand River Avenue, North Side, West of North Putnam Street

100-108 W. Grand River. Andrews Hotel (1887). C. E. Hoy, contractor.

Three-story painted brick Late Victorian block of four-storefront frontage along Grand River and extending along N. Putnam as well. The Grand River façade is divided into three sections – one at the east (streetcorner) end occupying half the width and two more to the west each half as wide – by broad projecting piers. The corner is angled to face the intersection. Upstairs windows are tall, narrow double-hung ones with low gabled cast-stone caps. There is a projecting beltcourse above the second-story windows, a band of corbelled brickwork below the frieze above the third-story windows, another beltcourse, with sawtooth brickwork band at its base, in the lower part of the frieze, and more corbelled brickwork below the parapet with its slightly projecting molded cap. The diagonal corner section contains a doorway at each level, the upstairs ones fronted by tiny balconets with wrought-iron railings. The main entry to the upper floors, set in a broad, low arch and containing a modern door with sidelights, is located between two storefronts in the east section of the front. The west half of the front contains two storefronts, each with a large window and door to its right – both together now housing a single store. The building's east façade contains more tall double-hung windows.

This largest building in the district was built for Charles Andrews, who had his Andrews Hotel in the east part of the building, with a first-floor restaurant in the rear and the hotel lobby in the front. The middle and western sections contained stores and offices. C. E. Hoy was the contractor in charge of the project and the reported cost was \$10,000. Original store fronts were broad, pilaster to pilaster with tall store front glass consisting of transom windows. The Andrews Hotel replaced the three-story wooden Lombard or Spaulding House hotel, which had stood at this same spot since about 1852 when the plank road was constructed along what is now Grand River Avenue. The Andrews family operated the hotel and restaurant for the next three decades. In 1895 the Fellows and Lane barber shop was in the hotel, while the next year, 1896, E. J. Goit/Goyt used the office under the hotel for a cigar factory. That same year of 1896 was when electric lights were first installed in the hotel. By 1913, under the ownership of Joe J. Glaser, the name was changed to the Hotel Glaser. Later a coffee shop operated in the corner spot, and then the building was vacant for many years.

Shortly after the building opened in 1887, "The Famous" department store occupied the west two sections of the building. The Watkins Brothers clothing store occupied the middle section for about ten years after the building's construction. In 1888 and 1889 two young ladies by the name of Kallman and Mulcahy operated a boutique in the end section. In 1894 George Pennock and Robert M. Porter operated a hardware store in the west section of the block. Over the years the middle and west locations have housed another barbershop, Parker Dry Goods (c.1908), Barrett's Clothing Store (1909-1927), a funeral parlor in the 1930s, and a Kroger Grocery store. In 1971 a Gambles store moved here from East Grand River Avenue; it occupied the west portion for a few years.

In 1971, when the Boron Oil Company attempted to purchase the entire building as the site for a gas station, a group of local businessmen, calling themselves the "Future of Williamston," fought the effort and themselves bought the building. In 1979 Gilbert Wilkins bought it from the businessmen. He operated "Wilkins TV and Appliance" in part of the building until about 2003. The location is currently a movie rental store called Planet Video. The middle section (104 West Grand River)

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is the location of Legends Jewelry while the west section (108 West Grand River) houses the Dollar Times, owned by Jim Belles.

The Story of Williamston, p.21; *Williamston Enterprise*, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1894, misc. dates; *History of Williamston* by Merrifield and Howarth, p. 20, 32-34; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p.2-3; Jim Belles; Tom Cassaday interview, 2011; State Register application, 1977; photo Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c.1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p. 12 c.1922; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.30 c.1924; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76 c.1971; photo *History of Williamston*, p.31, pre-1924; photo, *History of Williamston*, old Spaulding House, p.34, c1880s?.; 1912 postcard).

118 W. Grand River. Waldo Building (1893)

Three-story single-storefront red brick Late Victorian with bracketed metal cornice. The street level retains an old storefront with its entry at the right and a large window, on very low paneled wood bulkhead, at the left. The brick piers flanking the entry and window and the area between the tall door and window transoms up to second-story window sill level now have a thin white cement or stucco finish through which the brick is still visible. The upper floors each contains three double-hung front windows, the two at the left above the store window grouped closely together while the third is far to the right near the end wall of the Andrews Hotel building. The windows have cast-stone caps with Eastlake-inspired detailing.

The building was built in the summer and fall of 1893 by Isaac Clawson for Scott Waldo. The lot previously contained a wooden structure, the Hammel Building, which was demolished in May of 1893 to clear the site for this brick building. The foundation was laid in June of 1893 with the top story completed in August for Waldo, a local real estate developer. The building's third floor, for a short time after its opening, housed a cigar manufacturer. A postcard dated 1908 shows this location with a grocery store operating at the site. Later, a restaurant, a drug store and the telephone company were in this building. Around 1930 Dan Wycoff operated a Red and White Grocery on the first floor, which he later sold to Chet Harger. When that closed, a pool hall opened in the building. By 1971 Dave Monroe operated the Western Wear and Tack Shop there; In the 1980s Woodland Gifts. The store was vacant for some time, but in 2003 "Bloom" opened featuring stylish designs for homes. Ally Wendt remodeled the inside in 2004 and the original tin ceilings remain to this day.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p5-6; *Williamston Enterprise*, 1893; Ally Wendt interview on 1/8/2011; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c. 1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.30 c.1924; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971; photo, *History of Williamston*, p.31, pre 1924; 1912 postcard.

122 W. Grand River (c.1905-08)

One-story red brick with tall plain brick upper façade, with recessed brick panel filling most of the space, crowned by projecting brick parapet; modern floor-to-ceiling glass storefront outlined on either side by horizontal boarding. Old transom visible from inside. Stylized terra-cotta trim band below the projecting parapet.

A postcard stamped 1908 and a 1912 postcard show the present building. The 1910 Sanborn map lists it as a harness shop. In the 1930s it contained a four-lane duckpin bowling alley owned by "Cap" O'Brien. Later, around World War II the building housed a meat store. In the early 1990s it was part of the West Side Deli chain food store based in East Lansing. Later, it served as a deli not affiliated with the local chain. Then Craig Banwell opened it as a pizza place and remodeled the inside to capture the feel of an Italian villa with exposed original tin ceiling. Most recently it housed a Mexican restaurant, which closed in March of 2011.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p. 6; Interview with Craig Banwell; photo Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09 c.1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p. 30, c. 1924; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971; photo, *The History of Williamston*, 31, pre 1924; 1912 postcard.

126 W. Grand River. Greenaway Store (built between 1922 and 1927)

One-story red brick building with tall upper façade similar to 122 with large shallow recessed brick panel below projecting plain brick parapet. C. 1970s three-part storefront with arched treatment and center entry.

A postcard dated 1912 and a c. 1922 photo show this location as an empty lot, but a c. 1927 picture shows this building with the now paved (c.1922-23) Grand River Avenue. In the 1930s Greenaway's Clothing Store, owned by Sue Greenaway and later her son, C. R. "Chick" Greenaway, operated until 1968 here. In 1968 it housed Howell Town and Country Real Estate. It currently houses an antique store.

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Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.6-7; 1986 video interview by David Jones of Howard Gorsline, Graham Jackson and Chick Greenaway; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c. 1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.30, c.1924; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p. 76, c.1971; 1912 postcard.

128 W. Grand River. Gorsline Brothers Building (1906)

Two-story single-storefront building with rockface concrete block front and plain block sides. Slightly projecting block pier on the east (right) side rises to a projecting block frieze with plain cap. There are two square-head double-hung windows upstairs, with concrete slab sills and lintels, and a standard three-part center-entry storefront below, with exposed structural beam above supporting the second-story façade. Vertical shiplap “fill” above first-floor window glazing in transom location.

The 1910 Sanborn map shows this building, which was built for the Gorsline furniture and undertaking business, reportedly in 1906. The interior still features an elevator to transport furniture (and presumably coffins). In 1922 the Gorsline Brothers had relocated their business. In the 1930s John Fraser’s hardware store was at the location. In 1942 it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Dale Heminger and Everett White. Shortly thereafter, Jewett’s and then Reid’s Flowers operated at the site and from 1958 to 1970 Molzer’s Hardware. In 1973 the Bargain Barn Fabric Center was at this address. Later a tea room and restaurant operated by the Petrides family operated in both stories of the building. For the last approximately fifteen years, the building has been the site of a dance studio, owned by Elizabeth Williams. She operates the studio on the main floor and lives in a second-story apartment.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.7; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; Elizabeth Williams interview; 1912 postcard; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c. 1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.30, c.1924; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, 28 and aerial view, p.76, c.1971; 1912 postcard.

132 W. Grand River. “The Bucket” (c.1910)

Two-story single-storefront concrete block building refaced in new materials since fires in 2005 and 2007. The building’s front retains two decorative iron storefront columns flanking a large central storefront window, but the rest of the three-section storefront, with its entries at the right and left and the rest containing upper (transom-height) and lower windows enframed in modern red brick, postdates the fires. The upper front retains three vertical window openings, but they are filled with single lights and the rest of the facade is finished in vertical wood boarding below a modern EIFS cornice treatment that displays a hint of the traditional cornice form. The building burned in 2005 and was remodeled and then burned again in 2007 with a re-opening in 2008.

The 1910 Sanborn map and a c. 1912 postcard show this building. The 1910 Sanborn lists the use as “pool room,” the 1922 one as “pool.” In the 1930s the Thomas Brothers (Tom, Ace and Bert) ran a bar there. Later the bar took on the name “The Bucket” with food service and pool tables. While a sign across the front referred to the “Williamston Athletic Club, Food and Spirits,” the place was still referred to as “The Bucket.” After being purchased by Craig Banwell in the early 2000s a massive remodeling project changed the look and feel of the building. Food then became the business feature, but a full liquor bar still remained. Later, around 2008, a dance club called Club Rumorz was added in the second story. The business closed in mid-February of 2011. The 1922 and 1931 Sanborns show a hall in the second story. In the 1920s the second story was used as the Williamston High School gymnasium for boy’s basketball games.

1912 postcard; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p. 7; 1986 video interview by David Jones of Howard Gorsline, Graham Jackson and Chick Greenaway; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.30. c.1924; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971; 1912 postcard.

138 W. Grand River. Store (1971). Non-contributing.

One-story single-storefront 1970s contemporary wood frame building with cedar lap siding. Built by Church Johnson of Williamston. Broad projecting gable-roof “Alpine” canopy spanning the front with its single recessed entry. Eight inch butt cedar lap siding, with double wood picture windows.

The structure replaced a brick one that burned in early 1970 or 71 and housed Mayhew’s Restaurant at the time. This new building took the same small, one-story form as the original. Currently it houses an artist’s store, called “The Artisan’s Circle.” In the past ten years, it has housed a futon and vacuum repair store (Snookie’s) and before that “The Hub,” a high speed internet gaming lounge and computer repair store. Before that, it was a store featuring hand-made wooden log furniture. In the 1990s it housed the McDonald Company, an engineering and design firm.

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Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.8; *The Story of Williamston*, p.75; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.30 c.1924; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76 c.1971; 1912 postcard.

142 W. Grand River. Klunzinger Store (built during 1900-10 period)

Two-story single-storefront concrete block store, with stucco or EIFS-faced upper façade installed over rockface block but retaining two square-head windows. C. 2002 storefront with entries at either end, rubble stone piers either end and bulkhead below multi-light center storefront window.

A fire west of the corner hotel destroyed much of this block in 1895, so this likely dates after that tragedy. The 1910 Sanborn map and a 1912 dated postcard show this building. The 1910 map lists the use as a harness shop, presumably George Klunzinger's. The 1922 map shows a cream station; it was run in the 1930s by Art and Blanche Kitchen. Later Mrs. Louis (Marian) Logel ran a flower shop in this location. Mahaney's Dry Cleaners operated after that for many years. Grand River Floral opened in 1974 and operated until late 2010. The business was purchased by Dawn Marie Joseph in 2010 and after painting the outside, the store was named "Vivee's" and added coffee and sweets to the floral business and installed a small seating area in the front portion of the building.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.8; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; 1912 postcard; photo, 1985 Williamston Depot Museum calendar, undated; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.30, c.1924; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971; 1912 postcard.

146 W. Grand River. Detroit Edison/Maloney Carpet Store (c.1934; c. 1950s)

One-story building with c. 1950s red brick front with recessed central area containing the entry at the west (left) and large windows east of it, set on low brick bulkhead. The door and window trim is of aluminum. A square plaque formed of tiles has been added in the center of the frieze.

The building was built by the Detroit Edison Power Company after bringing the surrounding rural area electricity as part of the REA project during the Great Depression. It served as the billing office for Detroit Edison for many years. It was also later a Maloney Carpet store and then Mary Jane and Neal Mason's House of Calico from 1970 to 1982. Since 1986 the "Fabric Gallery" owned and operated by Wallace and Melissa "Meese" Wilson has occupied the space.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.8; Meese Wilson, "First Friday's survey, 2008"; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p. 20, c.1924.

150 W. Grand River. Sun Theatre (1946). Francis J. Corr & Son, Lansing, contractor

One-story Moderne concrete block structure with enameled metal panel front façade in bright red below a broad V-shaped marquee that extends across the entire front and in light tan accented in dark tan above. The twin double-door entrances are set into a broad recess with rounded edges below the marquee, and the front to either side has a coming attractions display case. The enameled metal marquee displays the theater's SUN name above each face and a sun form with radiating rays in the center apex of the V. The block side and rear walls are exposed, the exposed west side displaying projecting buttress piers. The building remains in its original use as a movie theater.

After purchasing the Gem Theatre, located in the eastern section of the National Block, and operating it under the Sun name for a time, Sam and Dick Montgomery then had this larger movie theater built and occupied it in 1946. The Montgomery family owned and operated the theater for about the next forty or so years. After being closed for a few years, the theater was purchased and reopened by the Robitaille family in 1980; they operate it to this day.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.8-9; *The Story of Williamston* p.15; *History of Williamston* by Merrifield and Howarth, p.79; WHS Adult Education pamphlet, 1989-90.

154 W. Grand River. Szechuan Gardens Restaurant (1930s (?) and later).

Non-contributing because no historic finishes are visible.

Narrow-fronted freestanding one-story frame building with flat roof and vinyl siding. A large window fronts the street, with a side door on the east side. The front of the tiny building is adorned with an awning which slightly hangs over the front sidewalk. It shares a very small, one row dirt parking lot with the "Wood Building" next door.

The 1910 Sanborn map doesn't show a building at this location, but the 1922 and 1931 Sanborns have a small brick veneer cobbler shop here near the street and a narrow and deep two-story house behind. The 1941 update shows only a different-shaped store near the street, with the separate house gone. In the 1930s Clarence Baxter operated a shoe repair shop in the front of the building, while living in the rear portion. Later W. Robert "Bob" Wood used the building for his

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Justice of the Peace office. In the early 1990s the building housed Bob and Barb Riske's "Brewster House," which served coffee and light food. Since the late 1990s the location has housed a Chinese food restaurant/take-out business.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.9; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc.

160-164 W. Grand River. Wood Building (1926-27)

Broad-fronted garage building with red Commercial Brick front and stucco-finished block side walls, one story in height except for small two-story area at front end beneath arched roof. The front displays a broad transomed storefront with center entry flanked by a single wide window, above a low brick bulkhead, on either side, and a single vehicle entry at the right end. A low second story beneath the very low front gable contains four small square-head windows. Bands formed of single courses of stretchers and soldiers outline the storefront and garage bay sides and tops and single course bands of stretchers and soldiers of darker raised brick outline a narrow horizontal panel of vertical brickwork that extends across nearly the entire front midway between the tops of the storefront and garage bay and the concrete parapet cap, interrupted by the four windows. The panel band is subdivided by widely spaced concrete lozenge forms. A horizontal plaque containing the name WOOD is centered below the front gable.

The building was built for W. Ives and Zoe Wood as a car dealership and gas station, with an apartment for the family upstairs. Construction began in the fall of 1926, with the building opening on February 19, 1927. The building housed several Ford dealerships over the years – Burton Bunn; Andress Ford; Wood and Sons Ford; and Slater Ford Sales, 1958. Later other businesses would occupy the building, including a farm implement store and a professional wrestling room. Parts Plus, an auto supply store, opened here in 1989 and operated until 2002. Then, Rusty Crow Antiques operated in the building until 2005 when Wood and Sons Corn Bin Sales opened. Operated by descendants of the original builders, Dave and Theresa Wood, they split the front portion in early 2011 to also house Tina Brookhouses' Fitness Studio in the western half of the building. The 1931 Sanborn shows the taller right-hand bay housing the "Fire Dept." By 1941 this use was no longer present.

Wood Family papers; Theresa Wood; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates.

East Grand River Avenue, North side, east of Putnam Street

101-109 E. Grand River. National Block/Carriage Travel (1874/c. 1937)

The three-story three-storefront mansard-roof National Block was built at the northeast corner of Grand River and Putnam by local businessmen Daniel Crossman, George C. Whipple, and Jerome B. and James B. Waldo and was originally occupied by a bank, hotel, and commercial space. The block as it stands today is comprised of the following two sections:

• **101 E. Grand River. Peoples State Bank Building (1874; c. 1937).**

Two-story single-storefront building now with sleek limestone-trimmed red-orange brick front dating from a c. 1937 renovation. The entry, at the east (right) end of the façade, has a broad limestone surround, and limestone is also used for a sillcourse, beltcourse below the second-story windows, and the plain cap atop the parapet. The front and side walls meet at an obtuse angle and the untrimmed brick interlock at the corner leaving spaces, providing an eye-catching pattern of alternating light and shadow. The windows are for the most part square-head double-hung ones. A copper canopy added in the 1990s now shelters the first-floor front and extends around the side one bay.

This building, originally the west wing of the 1874 National Block, was built for the Crossman & Whipple Exchange Bank and the original poured concrete two-story vault remains inside the building. The bank was later reorganized as the Crossman & Whipple Bank and became a state bank in 1909. The basement office originally had an entrance on the west (Putnam Street) side. This part of the building also housed the post office, a telephone company on the third floor, a barbershop in the basement and the local newspaper in its first decades. In 1937 the two banks in town, the Crossman & Williams and the Williamston State Bank, merged to become the Peoples State Bank. After this the exterior was remodeled with simplified new brick street facades and the third (mansard) story removed. The 1941 Sanborn update still shows a three-story building, suggesting the possibility the remodeling hadn't taken place yet.

In the mid 1960s the bank removed to a new building at the southwest corner of South Putnam and Middle Streets. In 1971 Jones Realty was in the building, with a yarn store operating in the back portion. In the early 1980s Smithsonian Investments occupied the building, and an accountant, Wilton Goetz, also occupied space until around late 1985. In 1983 John and Bev O'Malia leased the space for Carriage Travel. From 1995 to 1998 they undertook a remodeling project

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which including changing the front entry and walling off a front, basement entrance. The second story was also made into an apartment in August of 1986. This location operated as the travel agency until 2008. It is now vacant.

Williamston Enterprise, misc. dates; *History of Williamston*, by Merrifield and Howarth, p.33, 35, 47, 75; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p. 11; *The Story of Williamston*, p.27; Bev O'Malia interview, January 2011; photo, 2008-09 Williamston Depot Museum calendar, undated; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c. 1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.12, c. 1922; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.13 c.1920s; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971; photo, *History of Williamston*, p.31, c.1870; 1912 postcards.

• **109 E. Grand River. National Block/109 Building (1874)**

The east two-thirds of the National Block retain their Second Empire character. The two-story, two-storefront painted brick building with its slate-clad mansard-roofed third story is comprised of two sections, a west part that, projecting slightly forward of the fronts to either side and with its roof rising slightly higher than the east section's mansard roof, formed the National Block's original middle section, and an east section of about equal width along Grand River. The east section displays three narrow round-corner second-story windows, the west two broader paired windows – all with raised brick caps with cut stone keystones and springblocks. The mansard roofs are pierced by round-top dormers. The storefronts have recently been renovated and display three-part forms similar to when they were first built.

The center and east end of the "National Block" was erected in 1874 by Dan Crossman, George C. Whipple and Jerome B. and James W. Waldo. Originally the middle section contained a hotel and the east end a retail business. By 1884 the W. W. Heald Clothing Store occupied the east section, with the F. P Van Buren grocery store in the middle section. By 1893 a narrow one-story extension containing a separate storefront was in place alongside the east wall, apparently built as part of the Heald store. Some interior and exterior remodeling of the middle and eastern store was also done at this time by local contractor, Hiram E. Higbee.

The middle section was eventually vacated by VanBuren (c.1899?), only to be occupied by another grocery store, operated by Charles E. Morrison until at least 1929. By 1935 the now defunct *Williamston Review*, operated by Wayne Beatty, operated from the middle portion. To the east, Heald's operated for about forty years. By 1931 the Gem Theatre was showing movies in this section, according to that year's Sanborn map; this use reportedly began after the Williamston Opera House, located east of city hall, burned about 1929. The owners then added a concrete block rear portion to give more depth to the theater. That addition was demolished in 2010 as part of the current remodeling work. After the Gem was purchased by the Montgomery family, movies were shown there until around 1942; then Gambles Department Store occupied the space until 1968. That was operated by the Cassaday family, who lived upstairs, as the hotel's 2nd and 3rd floors had been converted to apartments by this time.

In the 1990s various businesses operated in both sections from time to time. Then, two different massive reconstruction plans were partially undertaken, but never completed, which resulted in the gutting of what remained of the original interior. The current work began in early 2010 by a group of local investors to create a brewery and restaurant and condominiums at the middle and eastern sections.

Lansing State Republican, 1874; *History of Williamston*, by Merrifield and Howarth, p. 33, 35; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p. 14; Tom Cassaday interview, 2011; Steve Eyke, 2011, *Williamston Enterprise*, 1884, 1887, misc. dates; photo, 2008-09 Williamston Depot calendar, c.1908; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c.1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971; photo, *History of Williamston*, p.33, c.1870s; 1912 postcard.

123 E. Grand River. Heald Building (1887)

Late Victorian two-story brick veneer with flat roof membrane. Storage basement has brick and fieldstone foundation. Decorative pressed metal cornice with large bracket each end and small paired intermediate brackets and dentil detail below the cornice. Banding at the top and bottom of second-story windows facing the street. Decorative stone or cast stone splayed arch window hoods over second-story windows. Raised piers each end of the facade transition into a raised frieze with corbelled brick detail below. A storefront cornice also displays dentils and a metal bracket at each end topped with a ball finial like the end brackets in the main cornice. The storefront itself has a recessed center entry, with mosaic tile floor, and granite bulkheads (c. 1920s). Over the years, an arched center cresting was removed from the front of the building.

Local builder Hiram E. Higbee constructed this building as a part of a business expansion for the Heald family, which occupied the adjacent eastern section of the "National Block." Heald reportedly had a connecting arched walkway between the two structures built as part of the 1887 building project, which was apparently financed by W.J. Gould of

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Detroit – as noted the 1893 Sanborn shows a one-story store building at that location. The Healds eventually left this building, and by 1909 and until 1945 the Engardio family operated a tobacco, ice cream and party store here. In 1918 the original floor was replaced by a marble, mosaic one. The Engardios then sold the business to the Baldino family, who ran Baldino's Confectionary here for about the next thirty years. In the 1990s the Country Connection and Oak Shop furniture business operated at the site. In 2002 Top Flight Financial, owned by Tim and Tracie Baise, purchased the building and painted the front exterior of the building.

The Story of Williamston, p. 29; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p.14-14; *Williamston Enterprise*, 1887 and misc. dates; Tracie Baise interview (12/29/2010) and First Friday survey; WHS Adult Education pamphlet, 1989-90; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c. 1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p. 76, c.1971; photo of lot, *History of Williamston*, p. 33, c.1870; 1912 postcard.

125 E. Grand River. King Building (c.1927?)

Commercial Brick two-story orange brick with flat roof membrane. Flanking raised piers faced in stacked stretchers with a stack of headers between, with ornamental rectangular concrete accent blocks just below the concrete slab cap. Broad slant-sided second-story oriel in center flanked by a single double-hung window on either side. The concrete slab-capped parapet contains a low raised gabled center section flanked by a lower flat section between running to the raised pier cap at each end. Below the center gable is a concrete lozenge accent block and below that a broad horizontal brick panel that, outlined by a single band of stacked headers at the ends and rowlocks at top and bottom, contains a centered concrete plaque containing the name KING. A storefront with deeply recessed center entry, with angled front corners, and low brick bulkheads, is capped by a shake shingled pent roof.

The exact date of the building has been a mystery. A photo dated around 1927 clearly has this building in the background. Local attorney and founder of the now defunct newspaper, the *Williamston News*, Clyde King, apparently had the building erected. While he was an early tenant, so was a loan office, and then the Hayward Insurance Agency, owned by Colin and Norabelle Hayward, operated here from 1944 to 1984. The second floor featured the law office of a Mr. Allen in the early years and later, after World War II, the office of Dr. Owen Hendren. In the 1990s a store, "Happycats," occupied this space. In the past few years it has been occupied by the Six Strings guitar store.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.15-16; *History of Williamston*, by Merrifield and Howarth, p.50; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c. 1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c. 1971.

133 E. Grand River. Sequels Clothing Store (c.1927?)

Commercial Brick one-story brick with a flat roof membrane. Faced in a continuation of the brick detailing on the adjacent 125 East Grand River Avenue building, this building is one story in height and apparently was built or renovated in the same time period. It displays raised brick piers of similar design to those in 125, with a separate entry at the left flanked by another pier, the piers faced in stacked stretchers, with a stack of headers between, and each displaying a concrete block accent near the top. There is a raised gabled parapet section in the center of the parapet and a concrete lozenge below the gable. Bands of headers outline a rectangular brickwork panel in the upper façade between the pier and central gabled area on either side. As in 125, the storefront contains a recessed center entry between large windows with brick bulkheads. No. 125's shingled pent roof continues across 133's front as well.

In the 1930s to sometime in the 1950s this location was the site of the Dinner Bell Restaurant. It was owned in that time by Clark and Belle Barrows, then by Roy and Alice Cummings and then Tony and Ann Kranic. It currently operates as a consignment store for women's fashions.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.16; photo, Williamston Dept Museum calendar 2008-09, c.1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c. 1971.

139-141 E. Grand River. Masonic Temple (c. 1899-1910)

Two-story two-storefront wide building with red brick front and concrete block side and rear walls – now with unadorned upper façade, with tile-capped parapet, containing four widely separated modern single-light windows. The windows are smaller than the old ones, and outlined by areas of modern brickwork. Two side-by-side slant-sided center-entry storefronts are finished with vertical T-111 bulkheads below the c.1950s windows, and the whole capped by an asphalt shingled mansard roof topped by vertical area of asphalt shingles below the second-story windows. A circa 1940s Masonic Temple electric sign, containing four circular lights each displaying a symbol for one of the lodges set within a pipe frame, hangs vertically off the upper center portion of the building.

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The 1910, 1922, and 1931 Sanborn maps show this building as an agricultural implements store. This structure was damaged in the 1938 *Enterprise* Fire, as the newspaper's offices were adjacent and to the east of this building. Some renovation – including, perhaps, the reconstruction of the upper façade in its present form – likely occurred at this time. In the 1941 Sanborn update the building shows for the first time containing two stores. By the late 1930s two clothing stores, Byerley's and McPhail's, operated in the building's two storefronts. In the early 1950s Byerley's closed and McPhail's expanded into their space. A women's clothing store, operated by Barrett's, was at this spot until at least the early 1990s. In 1998 the Sign of the Pineapple antique store opened under the ownership of Roger and Rosemary Philip and continues to this day. The 1941 Sanborn lists the upper floor as containing a lodge hall – presumably the Masonic temple, which has occupied this space since sometime after 1931.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.17-18; *The Story of Williamston*, p. 73; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; Roger Philip interview 4/9/2011; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c.1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.7, March 24, 1938; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971.

147 E. Grand River. Enterprise Building (1951-52)

Mid-century Modern one-story Tennessee orangish varied-hue rockface random ashlar stone front above smooth-face limestone base and bulkheads. Flat roof membrane. Left-hand entry and broad shopwindow band to its right set into asymmetrical recess that slants gently inward from right to left, with entry deeply recessed at left end, with slanting glass block area to its left. The recessed central part of the façade is capped by a flat-top slightly projecting aluminum canopy. 1950s aluminum window and door trim. Two eight inch steps up to the store front facing Grand River Avenue.

This building was erected in 1951 to replace the previous building on this site, which housed the *Williamston Enterprise* newspaper. That building burned March 24, 1938. The previous building was listed in the 1910 Sanborn as housing a printing office, although the 1910 map also shows the newspaper still at its former location on S. Putnam. The 1951-52 building was built to serve as the new home of the paper (Thompson Publishing and the *Williamston Enterprise*). It currently houses an auto supply retail store.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.17-18; Roger Philip interview 4/9/2011; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971.

151-53 E. Grand River. Stevens Building (c.1940)

Utilitarian style two-story two-storefront wide brick veneer with flat roof membrane. Simple brick veneer with minimalist square-head windows. Simple classical elements around the storefront area were added during c.2001 renovation. Second story has four windows facing the street. Building has two business/retail units on the first floor and apartments on the second floor.

An earlier building at this location was destroyed in the 1938 *Williamston Enterprise* fire. At the time it housed a John Deere Farm Implement business. This building shows in the 1941 Sanborn update as an auto repair garage. By 1944 Stevens Implement Company was located at this address. In the early 1950s a real estate firm was located here. For the past few years, Simplified Tax has occupied the western portion of the building. In the eastern half, a clothing consignment shop operated for a few years at the site. It is now vacant.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.17-18; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971.

161 E. Grand River. City Hall (1890)

Asymmetrical one and two-story hip-roof Late Victorian brick veneer building. Wood bracketed eaves and windows with segmental-arch heads. Roof of two-story right-hand portion flares slightly at eaves. Square-plan wooden tower, rising to an open four-sided belfry with tall pyramidal roof, rises from front slope of broad hip roof of one-story left-hand portion next to west wall of two-story part. Some original brick dentil banding, window hoods, and the round-arch fire bay entrances in the west firehouse portion lost during c. 1980s renovation.

Erected in 1890 by local building contractor Hiram E. Higbee to house a fire station in the west half and the Williamston Village/Williamstown Township Hall in the eastern half, with the Grand Army of the Republic meeting room upstairs. One of the purposes of the building was to meet the federal guidelines adopted to crack down on massive voter corruption during the Gilded Age, which called for the "secret ballot" in all public elections. The village, lacking such a place, voted for the combination firehouse/town hall in a public referendum earlier in the year. The village contributed \$1,500 for their

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portion of the project and the township added \$1,000. Work began in June of 1890 and was completed on November 5, 1890. L.C. Rice of Leslie did the building's brick work, while the ceiling's tin work was done by Robert Hunter. A city lock-up cell for the night marshal also was located in the rear of the building in the early years. The second-story meeting room was used by the G.A.R. until the 1920s and for many years by the Woman's Relief Corps. After many decades, the fire department moved out of the building to larger quarters and the township built a new facility on Zimmer and Germany Roads in the early 1970s. A massive remodeling project enlarged the interior to serve the city offices of Williamston.

In the early years, a driveway leading from the front of the western (fire station) half opened onto Grand River Avenue. Aluminum siding was installed across the entire front at the ground floor level in the early 1960s – now removed – to cover fenestration changes and give the structure a more modern appearance. Given the transformations the building has undergone over the years, the exterior retains a surprising degree of historic integrity.

Williamston Enterprise, 1890, misc. dates; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p.18-19; photo from 2010 Williamston Depot Museum Calendar c.1916-1929; photo *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c. 1971; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.77, c.1960's.

161 E. Grand River. Civil War Monument (1916)

Standing near the sidewalk line in front of the city hall building and facing south toward the street, the monument is comprised of a gray granite figure of a Union soldier at parade rest atop a square-plan gray granite pedestal resting on a broad granite base. The front of the pedestal bears the raised inscription, IN MEMORY OF ELI P. ALEXANDER POST NO.106, 1861-1865. The left side carries a raised American flag plus the raised inscription below it, PRESENTED BY THE WOMAN'S RELIEF CORPS NO. 96 AND THE LOYAL CITIZENS 1916. The local W.R.C. raised the monument's \$1600 cost.

West Grand River Avenue, South side, West of North Putnam Street

101 W. Grand River/102 S. Putnam Street. Fate's Pharmacy/Hayward-Pixley Insurance (c. 1971). Non-contributing.

International Style one-story brick with flat roof membrane. Asymmetrical front with dark brown stacked-pattern Roman brick "tower" at the streetcorner location that rises a few feet above the rest of the parapet. Aluminum-trim glass storefront filling the rest of the Grand River front, capped by projecting tall vertical-front green Gunite-like canopy. A second entrance at the south end of the otherwise blank Putnam elevation (102 South Putnam Street) features an aluminum-trim window and door under a modern awning below a wooden sign panel.

This building was constructed for pharmacist Wayne Fate in the early 1970s. It replaced a wooden structure that had housed a toy store and, before that for decades, a bakery. The pharmacy operated until the mid 1990s at this location. It then became the office of the Hayward-Pixley Insurance Agency, which currently operates at this site.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.33; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; 2 photos, *The Story of Williamston*, p. 31, c. 1960s.

111 W. Grand River. Bowerman Block/Barrett's (1874)

Italianate two-story two-storefront wide painted brick, with flat roof membrane. Wood cornice with decorative paired brackets and a modillion detail below horizontal panels, each with a central circle-within-a-circle pattern, between each set of paired brackets. Six tall square-head double-hung second-story windows with highly sculptural caps that, displaying Christopher Dresser-inspired plant-like details, edge the windows' upper sides and rise to central "crowns." Façade is slightly asymmetrical, with east (left-hand) storefront and upper façade bays narrower than west. Ground story front displays a paneled pier at either end of the façade and a central one between the storefronts. The piers and a pair of fluted iron columns in each three-bay storefront support a series of masonry segmental arches on which the upper façade rests – the columns and piers display richly detailed capitals and the stone springblocks from which the brick arches rise are carved with vine and floral forms. The west storefront has a slant-sided recessed central entry, while the east now contains only windows and, in one, a bank teller machine. A concave metal roof detail crowns the roofline above the cornice. The building has a storage basement constructed of fieldstone. The plain red brick rear façade contains boarded-up segmental-arch-head windows.

Originally this building was designed for two retail stores, each having separate entrances facing Grand River. Michael Bowerman's and H. H. Spaulding's dry-goods stores were likely the first tenants of the two store spaces. Conflicting

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records indicate that either in 1877 or 1882 F. J. Barlow located his jewelry store in the eastern half, operating until 1926. In the 1930s Rob and Edith Blanchard operated a barbershop in the east end of the building's front section for some time.

By 1879 John M. Crossman occupied the western half with his drug and paper store. Information about occupants of this end of the building is sparse before the 1920s. William S. Barrett opened a clothing store across the street in 1909 and apparently moved to this location in 1927. It is believed that in 1931 Barrett removed the interior wall which had separated the two stores and expanded into the east space. Abstract records indicate that Barrett purchased the building for \$3,000 in 1934 and his family operated the store there until 1969, when it was sold to the Mitchell family, who operate Barrett's clothing store to this day. In 1978 the Bowerman Building/Barrett's Building was listed in Michigan's State Register of Historic Sites.

The Story of Williamston, p. 28-29; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p.33-34; *Lansing State Republican*, 1874; State Register application; Property Abstract in the possession of Tom Mitchell; 2 photos, *The Story of Williamston*, p.31, c.1960s.

115 W. Grand River. Schweitzer Building (c. 1910)

Two-story dark red brick with flat roof membrane. The front's only decoration is in the frieze area, where a horizontal band of one brick deep recessed simplified lozenge forms is outlined below by a band formed of double headers stacked two high and alternately recessed slightly into the wall and laid flush and above by a similar band only one brick high. The broad façade is outlined by raised piers on either side rising to the corbelled brickwork-supported topmost part of the façade below a plain cap. The second story contains three square-head modern windows with simple slab sills. If these windows ever had caps, these are no longer present; the façade's stretcher bond continues atop the windows. Exposed steel I-beams that support the upper façade's brickwork above the storefront are supported by a round steel column located slightly off-center from the façade's midpoint. Each beam is cast with the maker's name, "Jones & Laughlin" (showing upside down), in raised letters. Rosette "washers" on the I-beams' fronts presumably reflect tie rods or struts that connect to more steel beams farther back in the building that also provide second-floor support. Aluminum frame window glazing on first floor above dark blue-painted random ashlar c. 1950s-60s bulkheads. There are three doorways facing the street with a double door, with aluminum framing, at the east end and single; old wood door, with large single light, in the west storefront; and a modern upstairs door at the west end. The plain brick side and rear walls contain a small number of second-story windows.

A devastating fire that wiped out the wooden structures west of this location occurred in 1915. The 1910 Sanborn fire map shows this building. Newspaper reports of the 1915 fire note that the "new" Schweitzer building was saved from major damage. The Schweitzers operated a meat market in Williamston, likely in this building, in the building's early years (the 1910 Sanborn lists the use as a grocery). By the 1930s the building housed a card room for local residents, which reportedly closed in 1935. Later an ice cream store operated by the Clarence Wright family and then by the Marvin family occupied this store. In the 1990s Rollie Cline operated Cline's Consignments here for much of the decade. After standing vacant for several years, in 2005 Shannon Poynter opened a photography studio, called Poynter-Phelps, here. After about two years in operation the studio closed, and the building has been vacant since that time. The 1931 map shows a lodge hall in the second story.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.34; *Lansing State Journal*, 1915; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; 2 photos, *The Story of Williamston*, p. 31, c.1960s.

127 W. Grand River. Western Auto Store (c. 1971). Non-contributing.

Utilitarian style one-story brick with a flat roof membrane. Symmetrical front with recessed central double-door entry flanked by a broad window, above low brick bulkhead, on either side. Multi-colored brick laid in a running band reads a red-brown color. Large plain white signboard extending across the storefront in the transom location. Behind the façade the rest of the building is built with concrete block walls.

The wooden buildings in this section of the block burned in a 1915 fire. In the 1930s this lot remained vacant. An aerial view of the city in 1959 showed this as a parking lot. In the early 1970s local builder, Chuck Johnson, constructed this building as a store for the Western Auto lawn and garden department store chain. In the early 1990s it held a second consignment store for Rollie Cline, who had first opened in the adjacent building, no. 115. On April 1, 1996 the Cappuccino Espresso was opened by Karen McKay and Linda Mullen, featuring coffee and baked goods. In 2005 it was sold to Abby and Emily Lilly-Lacca, who operated the business until around 2007. From 2007 to 2008 it was the home of the Michigan Culinary Exchange. It was then vacant but in March 2011 reopened as the Williamston Exchange, a second-hand goods and consignment sales store, which has since closed.

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Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.34; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates, First Friday survey, 2008.

133-35 W. Grand River. Hammond Building (c.1935-39)

Narrow one-story red Commercial Brick with a flat roof membrane. The front is divided into two narrow storefronts, with a door at each end and two tall transomed windows between them. The frieze displays a horizontal panel in the brickwork outlined by single courses of headers and rowlocks. The rear façade displays a central door in each half, with a tall glass block window in each outer side and two side-by-side short ones in the center. The building has been little altered.

This building was erected in the mid to late 1930s by Clare Hammond. The east store held his barbershop, while the General Telephone Company leased the west half for its local office. In 1954 the Harmon Real Estate Company occupied one half of the store. Currently, the English Cut Barbershop occupies the former Hammond barber shop location, with Roger's Chair Caning and Antiques in the western end.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p. 34-35; *History of Williamston*, by Merrifield and Howarth, p.7; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates.

137 W. Grand River. Quinlan Building/Tuesday Books (c. 1940s-early 1950s). Non-contributing because no historic features visible.

Broad-fronted one-story extending far back on the lot. Front is two storefronts wide and finished with horizontal clapboarding in piers that outline an east storefront and in the frieze below a plain projecting parapet. A three-part east storefront has a deeply recessed east entry and two more deeply recessed window bays to its west. The west storefront is deeply recessed and contains a central entry flanked by a window on either side above tall brick bulkhead. A broad and low band of glass block fills a transom area in the façade above the storefront recess. The façade displays a 2001 date block at the base of the east end pier. The building's east side wall, exposed behind the adjoining not-very-deep building to its east, is faced in vinyl siding but may be of concrete block beneath – in the far back end the concrete block construction is visible.

This property contained no building in the mid-1930s. Sometime before 1954 Jim and Frank Quinlan built this building to house their Quinlan Dairy creamery and also a meat locker, mentioned in a 1954 advertisement. By 1958 the building was known as Larry's Meat Locker, and the original locker remains on site in the rear of the store. Currently, Tuesday Books occupies this space and features children's readings as part of a locally owned, independent book store. It is owned by Theresa Grossman, Justine Dailey and Beth Phelps.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.35; *Williamston Enterprise*, 1958 and misc. dates.

141 West Grand River. Williams Carpet (c. 1920s). Non-contributing because no historic features visible.

Narrow-fronted and deep one-story concrete block with modern wooden "Alpine" front displaying a low gabled upper façade above a pent roof-capped storefront containing a single broad window set in wood horizontal boarding. The door, at the east end of the façade, is capped by a tall projecting gable. Cedar lap siding with diagonal siding above eyebrow that follows pitch of false mansard cap.

The 1931 and 1941 Sanborns show the building as a public restroom. It later became the headquarters for the village's Department of Public Works. Sometime later, probably in the mid 1940s, it housed the Williamston Police Department. In the 1980s and for the next twenty years it was the location of the Williams Carpet store, owned by the Stephens family. It was vacant for several years after the carpet store closed. In 2009-10 it housed a Native American jewelry store, Crazy Horse, which closed after a few months. A new store called Bungalow 47 recently opened in this location.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.37; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc.dates.

145 West Grand River. LaFollette Kitchen & Design Studio (1930s; 2004). Non-contributing because no historic features visible.

One-story concrete block with wooden Neo-Victorian front installed in 2004. Flat roof membrane. The foundation is a slab on grade. Three-section front with slant-sided recessed center entry flanked by large windows on paneled wood bulkheads. Broad decorative paneled piers either end of the front support a flat-top parapet capped with classical cornice. A low three-part transom, with dentil-like band above, displays the words "KITCHEN," "DESIGN," and "STUDIO." A gable-roof metal garage section has been added to the back.

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In the early 1930s this lot was vacant. Subsequently Sam Webb opened a restaurant at this site. In 1950 Williamston Plumbing and Heating occupied the building, and by 1959 a car dealership. A hair salon was also in this spot before LaFollette Construction assumed the store.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p. 37; Steve Eyke; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates.

East Grand River Avenue, South Side, East of Putnam Street

100-120 East Grand River. Leasia Building/Keller's Plaza (1899)

Along with the Andrews Hotel building the largest business block in the downtown, this two-story painted brick building stands at the southeast Grand River/Putnam intersection, extending twelve bays along Grand River and seven along Putnam, with a rounded corner retaining the last of the old single-light second-story windows (with low transom sash) that bows around the corner like the brick walls. The upper facades display large square-head replacement windows, each containing a paired double-hung window with tall blind panel in place of transom above. Above, the upper façade presents a narrow band of dentil-like brickwork below a narrow strip of molded round-butt brick that forms the base for a broader band of corbelled brickwork, which is in turn topped by a parapet formed of sunken horizontal brickwork panels below the slightly projected molded parapet. The building is divided into two sections by a joint in the exterior brickwork below a drop in cornice height along the Grand River frontage about two-fifths of the way from the east end along Grand River and by a north-south wall through the interior aligned with it. In the eastern two-fifths of the Grand River front the parapet steps down slightly. The street level contains four storefronts, one at the corner, two on the Grand River side, and another along South Putnam. The storefronts were rebuilt around 1970, with large wood shake shingle pent roofs covering the former tall transom areas; areas of vertical boarding, with raised rectangular panel frames with cut out quadrant corners, between the storefronts; and wood shingle accents and white and dark red-painted trim, but the original steel beams spanning the storefronts remain visible above the pent roofs. Upstairs entrances are located at the east end of the Grand River façade and between the two store locations on the Putnam side.

Named Keller's Plaza by a local physician and wife who purchased it in 1981, this immense landmark structure was originally known as the Leasia Building and was built for James Leasia, a pharmacist whose father was the first doctor in Williamston in the 1840s, on a site previously occupied by wooden buildings that had burned in 1897. There is a report that merchant F. P Van Buren had the building erected with the intention of moving his expanding grocery to this location. It is possible that this building was the work of Hiram E. Higbee, a local contractor who built a number of the downtown buildings around the time this one was constructed. Van Buren then reportedly sold the corner spot to local attorney, W.T. Webb, whose daughter was married to Leasia.

The James Leasia drug store (1884-1901) and then subsequent druggists occupied the corner, northwest section (100 East Grand River) of the building for much of the next century, including Leasia & Headley (1901-1916), Headley (1916-1929), Headley and Monroe (1929-1937), J. C. Monroe (1937-1953) and then Fate's Pharmacy. In 1968 the Gorslines purchased this section of the building. In the upstairs portion of the corner spot were the offices of Drs. Messenger and George Brett. After the closing of the pharmacy, several stores, including Things Beer and This, That and What Not were in the location until a hair studio, NuConcept, opened there a few years ago.

The 1899 Sanborn shows a general store occupying the entire first floor except the corner drugstore space. This was the F. P Van Buren store; Van Buren relocated his grocery store from across the street with the opening of this building in 1899. He retired in 1922, and the Gorsline family's furniture and appliance store then occupied this location for the next four decades. It currently houses H & R Block tax preparers and Yee Town, a Michigan-made products and crafts store.

The east section (120 East Grand River) housed part of the Van Buren store until 1922, when the Gorsline family occupied the space with their funeral parlor. The funeral parlor operated here until moving to their present location on Middle Street in 1946.

Around 1977 Cliff and Rose Strabbing bought the building from Howard and Wayne Gorsline and Fred Cole, but only owned it for a few years. On October 30, 1981, Dr. Ralph Keller and wife, Charlotte, purchased all three sections of the Leasia Building. They remodeled the inside in 1982 and, in June 1982 Keller's Ice Cream Parlor and Restaurant opened for business. In 1987 Jack and Nancy Kelley opened Kelly's Restaurant and Ice Cream Parlor where Keller's ice cream parlor had been. Currently, the Living Arts Dance Studio is in this site after the closing of a high end furniture store in the late 1990s.

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The Kellers also created a mini-mall with about a dozen rooms. At the time, the rooms were filled with antiques businesses operated by various independent dealers. Currently about a half dozen of the rooms are rented to local artisans as studios.

The building's second floor contained a large open area used for storage, but there were offices over the drug store at the west end. In 1913 Dr. G. H. Brett, physician and surgeon, had his office on the second floor over the drug store and Dr. H. J. Maher, dentist, also had his office on the second floor, accessed through its east entrance. In 1922 F. P. Van Buren allowed the eastern half of the upstairs to be used to house the public library. Later, it contained an office for the Gorsline Company and an apartment for Howard Gorsline.

In addition, an entry on South Putnam Street was also used by Van Buren's store patrons while the store was in the building. In 1929 the South Putnam entrance was used for the furniture store, with the funeral home entrance on Grand River Avenue. The west side entrance currently opens into a common lobby area and a large staircase for the second-floor occupants.

History of Williamston, by Merrifield and Howarth, p.17; *The Story of Williamston*, p. 26-27; *Williamston Enterprise*, 1897 and misc. dates; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p. 22; Wayne Fate notes; Dr. Ralph Keller family notes and interview, 12/29/2010; photo, 2008-09 Williamston Depot Calendar, c. 1908; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c.1910; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p. 13, c.1920s; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.32,c. 1968; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971; 1912 postcard.

126 East Grand River. Lockwood Brick Block/Ellie's Country Kitchen (pre-1886 – perhaps built 1874)

Two-story Italianate brick with a flat roof membrane. Raised brick piers edging the upper-story façade transition into raised frieze area topped by plain parapet that once contained a now removed bracketed cornice. Three round-corner second-story front windows with old two-over-two windows and raised brick caps with carved stone keystones and springblocks. Present storefront displays a center entry and small window to either side set into white vertical plywood paneling laid over first-floor storefront structure as part of c. 1970s renovation. Paneling terminates at mid-level banding. Two steps lead up to doorway. The storefront is sheltered by a tri-color cloth awning. Brick façade elements nearly identical with building at 109 East Grand River Avenue.

One of several buildings built for C. E. Lockwood in Williamston's downtown. One newspaper report mentions a brick building – perhaps this one – built for him in 1874. In the early years various general or dry-goods stores, including Samuel Tom's and, c. 1900, S. L. Webber's, operated on the first floor, with lawyers and justices of the peace renting space upstairs in the early years. The 1910 Sanborn map lists the second story as containing hotel rooms – perhaps as part of the Commercial Hotel in the adjacent building to the east – and the 1922 map shows it occupied by a drug store.

The present use as a restaurant space began in the 1930s with the Shopbell Restaurant. It was followed by the H & M Restaurant in the 1940s and 50s run by Roy and Mark Harkness and Jim Mitchell. The Stiffler family purchased the business in the early 1980s and, naming it Ellie's Country Kitchen after Mrs. Stiffler, continues to operate it.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.23; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c.1950.; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.24, c. 1891; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.32, c.1968; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971; 1912 postcard.

138 East Grand River. Commercial Hotel/IT Services of Michigan (1889)

Late Victorian two-story wood frame with upper façade finished in horizontal shiplap siding – one of only two wooden buildings remaining in the downtown district. Flat roof membrane. Original narrow square-head wood windows with 4/4 pattern and center mullions wider than horizontal mullions – the windows are flanked by too narrow modern wooden shutters. Storefront rebuilt c. 1970s with recessed entry at left and large windows at right – low wooden bulkheads and tall transom finished in wooden panels displaying quadrant cutouts at corners. A narrow asphalt shingle pent roof projects above the storefront just below the second-story windows. Original bracketed main cornice is visible in photos from the 1930s but has been removed. Exposed east side wall is finished in a light coating of stucco.

The 1893 Sanborn map lists "Wool, Eggs &c.," the 1899 Sanborn one the Commercial Hotel. But, earlier *Williamston Enterprise* notices list this location and the adjacent Lockwood brick building in the mid-1880s as housing various retail stores. Following the 1938 *Williamston Enterprise* fire, the newspaper located here from about 1938 to 1951 or 1952. Apparently, the store served as a lumber store for a time and later as a gift shop. In the past thirty years it has housed an

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antique store, The Sign of the Pineapple; Incognito, a candy and children's game store c.1990; a financial loan office 2000-2006; and now a computer repair shop.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.23; Roger Philip interview 4/9/2011; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.32, c. 1968 photo; *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971.

150 East Grand River. O'Leary Building/Red Cedar Grill (c.1880s-1890s and later)

Large two-story gable-front building with deep one-story flat-roof section to west and south. The two-story building is faced in brick in front and in clay tile or block on the east side at the street level, wide exposure asbestos siding in the second story all around and in the rear gable, and wood or vinyl pattern shingling in the front gable. The west side one-story section is faced in the same brick in front as the adjacent gabled section's front and in clay tile or block elsewhere. Broad former storefront windows across the front have been infilled with groups of small-pane windows outlined in vertical siding. The second-story front and north half of the east side contains tall square-head windows. Midway along the east side wall a slight change in foundation level and a break in the otherwise uniform pattern of clay tile blocks where small pieces of tile are present suggests the possibility that the building's rear gable-roof section is a later addition.

Possibly one of the oldest buildings in the downtown district, this building in the 1880s and 1890s housed a blacksmith, harness shop and livery station business run by P. O'Leary and then by A. B. McCollum. The 1893 Sanborn fire map lists it as Bliss Livery, the 1899 one as the W. Dalins Feed & Livery, and the 1910 map simply as a feed and livery stable. The 1893 and 1899 maps show the two-story building with a two-story rear section that extends outward to the west. In the 1922 map the building, still with the same footprint, is labeled a garage, but by 1931 the rear part with the westward extension is gone, replaced by a one-story brick "auto sales" extension to the west at the street end. The 1941 Sanborn update, which lists the building as "Auto Sales & Service," shows the building with the present one-story brick extension along the entire west side and across the back. The building was the home for a series of car dealerships, including "Jabs" Plymouth in the 1930s and George Johnson Plymouth-Chrysler in the 1950s. The Red Cedar Bar and Grill renovated the building in 1995 for a high end restaurant and continues in operation today.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.23-24; *Williamston Enterprise*, 1891 and misc. dates; photo from 2010 Williamston Depot Museum Calendar, August 30, 1950; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.32, c. 1968; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971.

North Putnam Street, North of Grand River Avenue, East Side

110 North Putnam Street (attached to 101 East Grand River). Profile Hair Design Studio (1887)

Late Victorian one-story painted brick with flat roof membrane. Uppermost façade displays projecting piers rising to corbelled brickwork-supported frieze with additional corbelled brickwork below a low tile-capped parapet. In the larger lower part of the façade the areas between the piers are infilled flush with brickwork and the two southerly bays each contains an off-center modern window. The northerly bay contains an entry with sidelight on either side. The building extends back (east) from Putnam only the width of 101 E. Grand River.

This was an 1887 addition to the "National Block" adjacent to the south facing Grand River. W.J. Gould of Detroit was the backer of this project and the addition at 123 East Grand River Avenue. This building was done at the same time as Hiram Higbee built the east addition to the "National Block" for the Heald clothing business. The builder is unknown, but as Higbee did the other addition and also renovations to the National Block for Heald and Van Buren at the same time, he may have been this structure's builder too. The original form had two doors fronting on North Putnam, leading into two offices, both used as doctors' offices. The first occupant in the far north section was Dr. F. W. Shumway, whose wife was lone, daughter of Daniel Crossman who was partly responsible for the National Block in 1874 with George Whipple and the Waldo family. In 1913 Dr. G. W. Bailey, physician and surgeon, was in this spot. By the 1930s Dr. Watson, a dentist, occupied the north end, with optometrist Dr. Walter Squires in the south end.

In 1985 Bev O'Malia purchased this section of the building with her corner spot at 101 East Grand River. For much of the 1990s Paul Oliver ran Stop Light Video rental in this spot and before that K & D Construction had its offices in the section. O'Malia remodeled the interior for Oliver and then when Susan Rice opened Profiles (1997), she did a second remodel.

History of Williamston, by Merrifield and Howarth, p.20; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p.12; *Williamston Enterprise*, 1887 and misc. dates; Bev O'Malia interview Jan 2011.

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South Putnam Street, South of Grand River Avenue, East side.

119 South Putnam Street. Rice Building/Fireworks Glass Blowing Studio (c.1880s)

Single-storefront two-story Italianate brick with large pressed metal cornice displaying a large bracket at each end and in the center and modillion and dentil bands. Upper façade has a slightly raised pier at either end rising to a projecting frieze and two round-arch windows, with raised brick caps with oversized keystones, rising above a continuous sillcourse. The windows contain old two-over-two sash. Raised brickwork, with segmental-arch heads, outline three additional half-height brickwork panels suggestive of more “windows” to left, center, and right of the two real windows – these blind “windows” are apparently original features of the facade. The present recessed center entry storefront, with its broad piers either side built of triple columns of stacked brick and its tall transom, appears to date from the 1920s.

The 1893 Sanborn fire map shows this building along with a photo from about 1897. It may have housed a hardware store operated by Charles Rice in the 1880s, as Rice owned this lot at that time. The 1922 Sanborn map lists this as a grocery and by the 1930s the Kroger grocery store operated in this building, before leaving for a larger location on Grand River Avenue. In the 1960s it housed a laundry and in the 1970s an art studio, and the Heat and Sweep store was here in the 1980s. In the 1990s it was the Scottish Thistle boutique and then it was the first local location of Fabiano’s Chocolates in the early 2000s, before Fabiano’s moved a few stores to the south on the same side of the block. Since the fall of 2007 it has been the site of a glass blowing studio operated by Dave Porter.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.27; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, 2008-09 Williamston Depot Museum calendar, c.1908; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.13 c.1920s; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971.

129 South Putnam Street. Pharmacy Plus (c. 1890s). Non-contributing because no historic finishes visible.

Two one-story buildings combined into one. The more northerly has a second-story tall upper front now clad in vinyl siding with a steeply sloping shed roof behind that masks the one-story flat-roof building behind. The southern part contains the recessed entry, and much of the rest of the front is comprised of modern windows. A green bubble canopy spans the entire front. The front displays no historic finishes.

This two-storefront wide property contained a two-story wooden building, with a bay window in the second story, and a second, taller two-story building, also of frame construction. The McCarrick Drug Store (Ford and Maude McCarrick) occupied the south building in the 1920s and 1930s (the 1922 Sanborn confirms this as a drug store). In 1941 Lester May purchased the drug store and it became May’s Drug Store (Lester and Millie May). The north section contained a meat market from 1907 to 1927 owned by Charles Goyt (shown in the 1922 Sanborn map as a meat market). Then, the business was owned by Bert Howarth and Ned Pfeifle (c.1929-) and later by Ned’s son, Gerald Pfeifle. On the brick facing (which is now covered by the modern, green Sparrow Pharmacy awning) is the word Pfeifle. In the 1960s the Mays purchased the meat market and expanded their drug store to the north by combining the two stores into one. However, the second story of the northerly building has been removed over the years. The Mays did remodeling work on their half in 1950 and again in 1951. Sparrow Hospital’s Pharmacy Plus chain has been in the location for the past twenty years and continues to use both halves of this modern building.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.27-28; *The Story of Williamston*, p.29-30; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, 2008-09 Williamston Depot Museum calendar, c.1908; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.13 c.1920s; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, aerial view, p.76, c.1971.

139 South Putnam Street. True Value Hardware Store (1887-88; c. 1920; 1970)

Three once separate buildings that, built at different times, have been combined into one store.

- North section (old post office, c. 1920?): One-story red brick, upper façade faced in stacked brick and topped by plain concrete cap. A c. 1950s aluminum-trim storefront with recessed entry at right has a narrow brick pier at the left (north) end and very low brick bulkheads. An asphalt shingled pent roof spans the front at transom level.
- Center section (1887-88): Two-story Late Victorian with red brick second story with smooth-faced stone or cast stone window sill-level beltcourse, caps over the three square-head front windows – the center one slightly taller and paired – and lintel-level beltcourse. The front is crowned by a low metal cornice resting on a corbelled brick band, the cornice with a broad gable-topped bracket at each end. The c. 1950s storefront contains three large aluminum-trim vertical windows set on low brick bulkhead – the bulkheads match the north section’s, and the north section’s pent roof also spans this front. Recessed second-story entry at south end of front.

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- South section (1970 addition): **Non-contributing.** One-story with plain red brick front that displays a band of aluminum-trim windows and a small asphalt-shingled pent roof that spans most of the facade. Back and exposed part of south side wall constructed of concrete block.

The center building was begun in 1887 and completed in January 1888 by local contractor Hiram E. Higbee. Since the beginning this location has been a hardware store with the various owners being Charles Rice, Charles Williams (1890), George Pennock and Charles Williams (1892), and then the Gardner family (1924), Vanetter's (1927), the Kitchen family, Lyle (1953) and son Chuck (1966), Tony and Vicki Perry (1990) and, since 1997, Jim and Barb VandenBerg, who changed the name to True Value Hardware Store. The second floor has been used as a meeting space by various groups over the years, including the Masons from 1893 or before down probably til they moved to their present home at 139-41 E. Grand River in the 1930s. Access was via a rear stairwell. The 1922 Sanborn map lists the second floor as a "Lodge Hall." In 2006 and 2007 the VandenBergs remodeled the interior of the building.

A 100+ year old photo shows a vacant lot on the hardware store's north side, while a two-story drug store stood to the south. The 1922 and 1931 Sanborn fire maps list the lot to the north as containing the post office. When the post office moved to a new home on West Grand River Avenue in the early 1960s the hardware store expanded into that building.

The 1922 Sanborn map has a small creamery on the lot south of the hardware store. But by the 1931 map that lot is shown as vacant. The hardware reportedly used the lot for outdoor displays for years. In 1970 hardware owner Chuck Kitchen erected the southern addition in that vacant lot.

Williamston Enterprise, 1887, 1888 and misc. dates; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p.28-29; *History of Williamston*, by Merrifield and Howarth, p.30; *The Story of Williamston*, p. 28; Barb VandenBerg interview and First Friday survey, 2008; photo, 2008-09 Williamston Depot Museum calendar, c.1908; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.13, c.1920s.

147 South Putnam Street. Liverance-Krumback Store/Gracie's Place expansion (c. 1880s/c. 1920s).

One-story red Commercial Brick, with rockface concrete block rear and south side walls, red brick laid in running bond, with three-course tall basketweave brick pattern at parapet. Storefront now contains four c. 1995 modern wood windows, separated by piers, across the front, the southerly one replacing a former entrance. A recently added steep asphalt shingled pent roof covers the former transom area from end to end.

This location contained a two-story Italianate building. Several 1891 newspaper articles refer to the building as the Shaft Building and the Bacon Building. B.A.Liverance moved his business here in April of 1891. The first floor served as the grocery, while the second floor was a living quarters. The Sanborn fire maps of 1910 and 1922 both show a grocery.

At least two fires ravaged buildings at this location, one in the 1920s and another in the 1960s. The first fire resulted in a major renovation that included removal of the second story or resulted in construction of the present building. By the 1930s the Krumback Grocery was operating at this spot, followed later by the Kinne and Worden Wilcox groceries. In the 1990s the McCormick Design architectural firm had offices here. When they moved, Fabiano's Chocolates moved from up the block and then, replaced by Ghinelli's Candies, was in business from 2005 to 2008. The building was remodeled in 2010 as an addition to the restaurant and bar directly to the south, Gracie's Place, by owners Dawn Marie Joseph and Paul Joseph.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.29; *Williamston Enterprise* 1891 and misc. dates; Paul Joseph and Krista Liverance; photo, 2008-09 Williamston Depot Museum calendar, c.1908; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.22, undated.

151 South Putnam Street. Millinery Store/Gracie's Place (c.1880s)

Late Victorian two-story painted red brick with a flat membrane roof. Raised piers in front mark the ends of the façade and separate a narrow north-end bay containing a separate entry from the broader south end of the façade containing an entry and storefront window. The upper front contains a tall window above the door at the north end and slant-sided bay window, with bracketed cornice, in the south part. The piers rise to a low projecting brick frieze with clay tile cap. A shallow projection along the center part of the south side contains a staircase to the second story entered through the narrow end facing Putnam. The building displays square-head two-over-two windows with cast stone caps detailed with Eastlake-inspired details. Original bracketed cornice with large overhang is now gone.

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The age of the building is unknown but by the late 1880s the building was the location of a millinery store operated by Mrs. W. W. Lewis. The second story was used by single ladies who worked in the store and made the clothing. By the early twentieth century, a photo shows it to be the Beeman hat shop. The 1910 Sanborn fire map shows a millinery, but the 1922 map lists the building as the American Hotel. By the late 1920s it housed Floyd Bennett's creamery shop, which also sold radios. After that, Betty Howell operated a beauty shop on the first floor for many years, while Betty and husband Lee lived in the second story. In 1976 it was the location of Brent's Pizza. An antique store operated in the 1990s at this spot, as an overflow from Ted and Loretta Lyons Lyon's Den shop across the street, and was called Lyon's Den, Too. After it closed, Scott VanAllsberg used it as an art studio for several years. For the past few years, Gracie's Place, a restaurant and bar owned and operated by Dawn Marie Joseph, has occupied the first floor, adding a rear patio. In late 2010 Gracie's Place expanded into the next building north.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p. 30; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo, Williamston Depot Museum calendar 2008-09, c. 1908.

South Putnam Street, South of Grand River Avenue, West Side

114-114 ½ South Putnam Street. Tuttle Block (1893)

Late Victorian two-story brick with flat membrane roof. Front is built of dark red brick, exposed north and south side elevations in yellow-buff brick. Raised pier at each end supporting raised brick frieze and bracketed metal cornice. Second story has single square-head window at left, with rectangular decorative metal lintel, and a slant-sided bay window, with bracketed cornice, at right. Metal storefront cornice caps a non-original painted brick storefront with a single horizontal window each side of a wooden door and a second-story entrance at right – all beneath a wood shingled pent roof that fills the former transom area.

Built by Hiram E. Higbee and his assistant, J. O. Bigelow, this was referred to as the Tuttle Block or Tuttle Building when new. The work began in the summer of 1893 and in September the newspaper reported the building had a "very pretty front." The first tenant on the second floor was the law office of W. F. Cairns, who was moving to town from the Ann Arbor area. The Hoagland Brothers barbershop was an early occupant of the lower level. In the first three years, the telephone office was located in the building (but unknown on which floor) before it was moved to Grand River Avenue. In the 1922 Sanborn map a jewelry store was operating in this space. In the 1930s it housed Clare Hammond's barbershop and after World War II a dry cleaning business operated by Curran and Ruth Wilton. After the Wiltons moved their business, a gift shop run by Grace Pfeifle and Ina Clauson was in the lower level. In the 1990s Bill's Barbershop occupied the building until he retired and then Alan's Barbershop for a short time, before they relocated to East Grand River Avenue. The location was then vacant but then re-opened with another gift shop. That also soon closed and it was vacant again, until Smeak Realty moved there during 2008.

Williamston Enterprise, 1893 and misc. dates; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p. 41-42; photo from 2010 Williamston Depot Museum Calendar, c.1908.

122 South Putnam Street. King's Cash Store/Williamston Theatre (1901)

Late Victorian two-story painted brick veneer with flat roof membrane. Above a remodeled storefront level, the building's second story displays three transomed square-head windows. Above them a dentil-like brick band rises to a narrow cornice-like band of molded brick from which rises corbelled brickwork and, above it, horizontal panels that, outlined by molded brick, contain ornamental terra-cotta blocks. Below a simple modern metal parapet cap is another band of decorative brick or terra-cotta blocks. A modern brick storefront contains large square windows, with colonial trim, to the right and a recessed entry, with slightly projecting fascia canopy bearing the Williamston Theatre name above it, at the left. Mid-band decoration covers original exposed beam (c. 2003). Modern Williamston Theatre sign also circa 2003. Original cottage style double hung windows replaced by vinyl windows. Original street level store front was an "open" design with glass between brick piers and to underside of exposed beam.

This building may have been built in 1901 by William T. Webb. The 1910 Sanborn is the first to show a masonry building; previous maps show a wooden building filling the same S. Putnam frontage. The 1910 Sanborn map shows a much deeper footprint. A large, lower rear extension has concrete block walls.

The building was the location of King's Cash Store, a general store, beginning in 1901 and for about thirty years. In the 1930s an A & P Grocery was here and in the 1940s a Kroger store. In the 1990s both levels were used as a gift boutique.

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After being vacant for some time, the building was occupied by the non-profit Williamston Theatre, created by John Lepard, Emily Sutton Smith and a few others, and brought live performances to the community beginning around 2003.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.42; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo from 2010 Williamston Depot Museum Calendar, c. 1908.

126 South Putnam Street. Enterprise Building (1891)

Late Victorian two-story brick with flat membrane roof. Pressed metal cornice with large flanking brackets, two smaller intermediate brackets, and dentil band between. Raised pier at each end of façade rising to corbelled brick frieze below the cornice. Thin rockface sandstone beltcourses span the façade at the second-story window sill and lintel levels, and the two second-story windows have beefy splayed rockface sandstone caps. A rectangular panel between the sandstone window caps bears the building's date of construction, 1891. The lower story now contains a slightly off-center recessed entry, with a low slider window on each side, and is faced in vertical T-111 siding below an asphalt shingled pent roof.

The original entry was also at the far north (right) of the building's front and had transom windows with Prairie mullion details. Top of building originally had a large center cresting with large base and half-round cap. Inset plaque stating 1891 as the completion date was apparently added years later as it doesn't appear in any photos in the first twenty years of the building.

Like the building to the north, this building also has a large, lower concrete block rear extension, its back wall now faced in T-111 siding.

The Williamston Enterprise reported that work on the building began on April 13, 1891, and that the contractor was Hiram E. Higbee. The paper and printing office moved into their new quarters in July of 1891. The 1910 Sanborn shows the *Enterprise* still at this location, but a photo dated 1908 shows Porter's Restaurant then in the lower level. However, the 1910 Sanborn fire map also has a "printing office" located on East Grand River Avenue at a later *Enterprise* location that was the site of the *Enterprise* fire in 1938. In the 1920s to 1930s the S. Putnam building was the location of Wint's Variety store, owned by Fred Wint, where local children often obtained their yearly school supplies. More recently, the Michigan Press Reading Service operated until the spring of 2008 at the site. It remains vacant at this time. In the 1910 Sanborn the second story housed the IOOF lodge quarters.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.42; *Williamston Enterprise*, 1891 and misc. dates; photo from 2010 Williamston Depot Museum calendar, c.1908; photo, *History of Williamston*, p.49, post 1886.

128 South Putnam Street. Williamston State Bank Building (1888)

Late Victorian two-story red brick veneer with flat roof membrane. Pressed metal cornice with pyramid-capped ends aligned above projecting piers and small brackets between. Second story displays narrow square-head windows with flat stone slab lintels and a stone beltcourse that spans the second-story front just below window lintel level. Flanking brick piers with curving limestone bases and metal decorative elements at second-floor level that match the cornice's end "brackets" above. Original storefront remains in place with square-plan recessed center entry, flanked by a large storefront window each side, and a narrow second-story entry, with tall transom above. The front retains its rectangular-plan metal columns flanking the store entrance and to left of the upstairs entrance and its original wood trim, including very low paneled store bulkheads. The store entry is flanked by sidelights and topped by a large square four-light transom. The building has a one-story shed-roof rear extension.

This was the original Williamston State Bank Building and was built for the business in the summer and fall of 1888. Around 1937, when this bank merged with the other bank in town during the Great Depression, this location was vacated. A few days later the Wint & Wygant Meat Market (Guy Wint and Roy Wygant) opened in this spot. Later, Greg Wygant operated the meat store here until the 1960s. In the 1990s Ted and Loretta Lyon operated an antique store called The Lyon's Den. It closed a few years ago with their retirement and the building now houses an office.

History of Williamston, by Merrifield and Howarth, p.47-48; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p.42-43; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates; photo from 2010 Williamston Depot Museum calendar, c.1908; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.13 c.1920s; photo, *The Story of Williamston*, p.28, undated.

140-142 South Putnam Street. Tonsorial House (c.1886-1888?)

Gable-front two-story red brick veneer-clad Late Victorian with brick falsefront topped by simple modern flat parapet cap with low-slope wooden central gable device. Two narrow square-head second-story front windows display curving-top

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limestone or cast stone caps with incised details and flat stone slab sills. Modern infill brick storefront, capped by tall steeply sloping wood shingle pent roof, displays a large horizontal window to left and wood door near center, with upstairs entry at right end of façade. Vinyl replacement windows on the second floor. The original upper cornice with bracketed elements has been removed.

This may be the Campbell Building referenced in the mid to late 1880s in the *Williamston Enterprise* newspaper. If so, it housed the post office at one time. The 1893 Sanborn map shows it as a meat market. Around 1900 the Austin & Laberteaux Meat Market occupied the building. The Lever Brothers Meat Market was located here in 1908 and the 1922 Sanborn map still shows the building as a meat market. After the 1938 *Enterprise* fire, the Williamston newspaper relocated here for a short time. Afterwards, a shoe repair store and then a sporting goods store were in the building. Currently, Rahn Wright owns and operates here the Tonsorial House, having bought the building in 1975 for \$12,000. In 1976 he installed a new roof and plumbing and in 2003 repaired exterior brick work and added a new window. Wright also owns the adjacent, vacant lot to the north (138 South Putnam Street), which he turned into a memorial park in 2008. That had a wooden building on it for many decades that, called the LaDue Building in an 1893 news article, probably dated to 1889. C. S Chamberlain had his retail store here around the turn of the century. The building was still standing in 1959.

Williamston Enterprise, 1893 and misc. dates; *Williamston in the Thirties*, by Bernard Eckman, p.43; First Friday survey by Rahn Wright, 2008; photo, 2010 Williamston Depot Museum calendar, c.1908.

148 South Putnam Street. Dr. Walter Squires Office/David H. Jones Law Office (1948)

Small one-story flat-roof with red brick front and concrete block side and rear walls. Center entry with colonial pilastered entry surround with flat-top dentil-enriched cornice treatment. Center door has two flanking, modern wood casement windows. The building front is angled slightly from the sidewalk/street line. The setback area contains plantings and ivy spreads profusely across the upper facade.

Dr. Walter Squires, an optometrist, built this office, vacating his former office at 110 North Putnam Street. The small building has always housed professional offices including those of Dr. Wendell Dwight, DDS, Robert Lewis, a credit union, Robert Platt, attorney, and Victor Meier, attorney, and now Williamston native David Jones has occupied it for the past twenty-five years.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.44; First Friday survey, 2008; David Jones.

150 South Putnam Street/102 West Middle Street. Wilton Building/Edward Jones Investments (#150) and Tina S. Gray law office (#102). (c.1950)

Two-story with red brick front facing South Putnam Street and concrete block sides and rear, including south side facing Middle Street. Flat roof membrane and slab foundation on grade. Simple brick veneer laid in running bond with buff mortar. Window sills are brick instead of cast stone or limestone. Simple slightly projecting slab parapet cap. Irregular segments of rockface Tennessee ledge stone inserted into the façade along the right and left margins. The lower story street facades display large almost square windows, the upstairs mostly standard square-head double-hung windows. The upper-story windows are now capped with rounded-top extruded polystyrene window hoods and those windows flanked by narrow shutters on both the east and south fronts – apparently designed to give the building a more “historic” appearance to complement its Late Victorian neighbors. Aluminum window glazing on both fronts. South side has two separate entrances; at the southeast and southwest ends. There is a large one-story concrete block rear extension.

The building was built for the Wilton family for their dry cleaning business, after moving from the Tuttle Building at 114 South Putnam Street. The corner lot earlier housed an agricultural implement store owned by Martin Jessop in the 1880s and later by George Akers. That wooden building was eventually removed; the 1922 Sanborn map shows a vacant lot. But, a few years later a Sinclair Gas station, which also had a horseshoe pit on the west end, running north and south, was located here. This building replaced the gas station. In the mid 1990s Cornerstone Book Store, owned by Marci Russell, operated here until her family moved from the community. Shortly thereafter, Edward Jones located an investment branch at this site.

The law office of Tina S. Gray is located at 102 West Middle Street, in the rear part of the building, and has a separate entrance on the southwest side of the building.

Williamston in the Thirties, by Bernard Eckman, p.44; *Williamston Enterprise*, misc. dates.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Architecture
- Commerce
- Entertainment/Recreation
- Social History
-
-

Period of Significance

1874-1962

Significant Dates

1874

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hiram E. Higbee
Isaac Clawson
Francis J. Corr & Son
C. E. Hoy

Period of Significance (justification)

Date of oldest documented buildings to fifty-year cutoff.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

With its commercial buildings dating from the 1870s to the 1950s, the Williamston Downtown Historic District reflects the long history of the area surrounding the town's central intersection as the central business district. The district meets national register criterion A in that its existing buildings have housed much of the community's commerce and social and recreational history over the years. The district meets criterion C in that its older buildings reflect the architectural evolution of small town commercial architecture from the 1870s to the 1950s.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Government surveyor Joseph Wampler laid out the lines of township 4 north of range 1 east of the Michigan principal meridian, what later became Williamstown Township, in 1824 and surveyed the sections in 1826. Prior to Euro-American settlement Chippewa/Ojibwa from the area used an approximately fifteen-acre area along the north bank of the Red Cedar River within today's city limits as a planting ground.

White settlement within Williamstown Township and the city of Williamston began in the spring of 1834 when brothers Hiram and Joseph Putnam migrated from Jackson County to the future Williamston site, cutting a road north to the location that became known as the Putnam trail and later as the Putnam road – following what later became Putnam Street, the city's primary north-south road today. They settled on the Indian field, built a small log cabin, and planted crops of their own, then returned to Jackson County till harvest time. Returning then, they harvested and stacked the crop of oats but then departed – never coming back.

The first sales of government land in the township, including those to the Putnams, took place in 1833, but there was no significant rush until 1836, when most of the township's lands were acquired from the government. The sudden interest in land in this still wilderness area corresponded with a general rush in southern Michigan lands that took place that year, but also must have been encouraged by, if it did not result directly from, construction activities on a road from Detroit to Grand Rapids. In 1832 Congress had directed the president to appoint commissioners to lay out a road from Detroit to the mouth of the Grand River, and the right of way from Detroit as far west as the future site of North Lansing (today most often called Old Town) may have been cleared by 1836. The 1838 Blois *Michigan Gazetteer* lists the road from Detroit to Grand Rapids as "completed" (293) – presumably meaning open to through travel rather than fully built. The state of Michigan (admitted to the union in 1837) gradually improved the road as a state road, appropriating \$5000 for work on the part of this "Grand River Turnpike" between Fowlerville and North Lansing, the stretch along which Williamston developed, in 1841 (Durant, 92, 338-39). The intersection of the Putnam Trail with the Grand River Turnpike, today's Grand River Avenue, later became the heart of Williamston.

During the winter of 1839-40 the brothers James M., Horace B., and Oswald B. Williams, from Batavia, Genesee County, New York, purchased the Putnam property and settled there. A few others settled around them during 1840. By that fall the Williamses had dammed the Red Cedar and put a sawmill into operation. In 1842 they added a grist mill.

Phelpstown Township, encompassing what became Williamstown Township and Locke Township, which adjoins it to the south, was organized in 1839. With the rapid progress of settlement, Locke Township was set off from Phelpstown in 1842 (Phelpstown became Williamstown Township in 1857). With improvements to the Grand River Turnpike, soon after 1841 "a line of passenger and mail-coaches was put on ... from Detroit to Grand River [i.e. Grand Rapids], passing through Williamston. O. B. Williams, one of the brothers, was interested in this firm" (Durant, 339).

The first merchant, Jonathan B. Taylor, from Grass Lake, set up in business in the spring of 1843 and the first physician, Dr. James B. Leasia, opened an office in 1844. About 1845 the first tavern building was built at the southwest corner of Putnam and Grand River on land donated by the Williams brothers (it burned in 1852). A post office was established in 1842 with James M. Williams as first postmaster. The mail initially arrived in town by a horseback rider once a week. About 1854 a daily mail, carried by stage, was instituted.

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A first plat of Williamston was executed November 22, 1845, by Oswald B. Williams. The plat encompassed a two block long area west of the Putnam Road, named Putnam Street in the plat, to Mechanics Street and a little beyond and extended from "Grand River Street" on the north (with lots along part of Grand River's north side) to south of South Street on the south. Development of a village took place only slowly for the first few years until the Grand River Turnpike was rebuilt as a plank road.

Construction of the plank road by the Lansing & Howell Plank-Road Co. in 1850-52 followed the construction of a plank road on the more easterly part of the Grand River Turnpike between Detroit and Howell shortly before by a Detroit & Howell Plank-Road Co. established in 1848. The Detroit & Howell company was authorized by the legislature to subscribe to \$15,000 of the total \$60,000 of stock in the Lansing & Howell company to help make sure the whole road from Detroit to Lansing, newly designated as the capitol of the state, was improved. Stockholders in the Lansing & Howell included such prominent New Yorkers as Erastus Corning of Albany and Horatio Seymour of Utica and other investors from Buffalo and Detroit. Durant says of the Grand River plank road, "It was extensively patronized, and a constant stream of travel and traffic passed over it, until the completion of the Detroit and Milwaukee Railway attracted a large portion of its former business" (95). The turnpike was maintained as a plank road until 1866, then graveled by about 1870.

The improvements to the Grand River Turnpike were followed about 1852-53 by construction of the Lombard House hotel by Franklin Lombard fronting on the road at the northwest corner of Putnam where the Andrews Hotel presently stands. The broad-fronted three-story side-gable wooden structure with its double-decker verandah across the front was a testimony to the numbers of travelers, land-lookers, and freight haulers the road carried. A second hotel, the Western House, was built about the same time farther west on the same side of the street in a location apparently beyond the edge of the nominated district. A map of the village in the 1859 map of Ingham and Livingston County shows the area platted in 1845 containing about forty to forty-five buildings, including the two hotels. The map's business directory lists four merchants plus Dr. Leasia.

Growth continued to progress but slowly until the town obtained a railroad connection. First efforts beginning in the late 1860s culminated with construction of the Detroit, Howell & Lansing Railroad, completed in August 1871. This line was consolidated during 1871 with a line being built from Lansing northwest to Ionia and beyond into the Detroit, Lansing & Lake Michigan (reorganized as the Detroit, Lansing & Northern Railroad in 1878). The line passed close by the southern edge of the original plat, and a depot was built just east of Putnam on the north side of the tracks.

J. B. and J. W. Waldo made a first plat of land east of Putnam Street in 1866 – before that the entire area east of Putnam reportedly only contained a wagon shop and blacksmith shop. With the railroad an accomplished fact, five more east-side plats were filed during 1871-73 encompassing an area between the Red Cedar on the north and the railroad line on the south much more than double the size of the original plat. This new area included the block of the business district between Putnam and Cedar Street included in the historic district. The 1895 map shows additional platting north of the Red Cedar and at the south end south of the railroad line.

The railroad resulted in economic boom times for the settlement. In April 1871 the state incorporated a Village of Williamston. The 1874 village map shows a complex of buildings around the depot that included the J. M. Tompkins & Co. Wheat House, Crossman & Whipple Elevator, and E. Henning cooper shop and stave mill. The town then also contained two sawmills, a grist mill, and a planing mill. The following year Daniel L. Crossman built near the railroad line his Walk-Away Mills, a steam-powered mill that as of 1880 produced forty barrels of flour daily that was shipped primarily to Detroit and also feed "shipped to the northern pineries" (Durant, 340). By 1880 the town also contained two carriage and wagon shops. Other than the saw and grist mills, all this industrial development took place in the 1870s after the railroad line was built. As of 1880 the town had a population of about 1100.

The map also reveals a far more developed business district as well. While the 1859 map shows little more than a scattering of what may have been largely commercial buildings along Grand River just west of Putnam, with nothing east of Putnam, the 1874 map shows nearly solid rows of buildings along both sides of Grand River west from Putnam for a third of the way toward Jackson, the first street west, and additional presumably commercial development the rest of the way to Jackson and beyond. Commercial buildings also occupied the southeast Grand River/Putnam corner where the Leasia Building now stands and extended east a short distance on both sides of Grand River and also south on Putnam for most of the first block to Middle Street. The area occupied by the business district then, in fact, encompasses about the same area as today's nominated historic district.

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This boom period saw the construction of what were probably the first three brick buildings in the downtown. They included the three-storefront three-story mansard-roof National Block at 101-09 E. Grand River and two-storefront Bowerman Block at 111 W. Grand River – both built in 1874. A Lansing *State Republican* notice of August 14, 1874 taken from *The Williamston Enterprise* reports plans by C. E. Lockwood to build another brick store building. This Lockwood Brick Block is thought to be the building standing at 126 E. Grand River. These 1874 buildings are today the oldest buildings in the district whose dates of construction are known.

The largest of these buildings, the National Block, was built by businessmen Daniel L. Crossman, George C. Whipple, and Jerome B. and James W. Waldo. The Waldo brothers were responsible for platting three of the new local subdivisions in the 1866-73 period and also owned a planing mill. Crossman and Whipple relocated to Williamston in 1871 to take advantage of the business opportunities in the rapidly growing town, moving from Dansville, a town that, located farther south in Ingham County, had no railroad connection. In 1872 they opened their Crossman & Whipple's Exchange Bank. The bank moved into the National Block's west (corner) storefront when that building was completed. Crossman, as noted above, was also the owner of the Walk-Away Mills.

The decade of the 1870s following the completion of the railroad marked a key boom period in Williamston's early development. But the village grew little in population during the 1880s – the 1890 population was 1139 – and, in fact, the population stagnated in the next several decades – 1113 in 1900, 1106 in 1910, and 1060 in 1920. Williamston's economy was based on the town being a market center and railroad shipping point for the local farmers and their agricultural products. Few industries augmented this agricultural base – primarily a short-lived coal mine and the New Way Knitting Co. mill, which opened in 1908.

Despite the lack of actual growth, the business district underwent an ongoing transformation during those years as brick buildings replaced older wooden ones. In 1887 Charles F. Andrews replaced his former hotel, the old Lombard House hotel, later known as the Spaulding House, with the massive three-story brick Andrews Hotel building at the same site, 100-108 W. Grand River. Next door to the west at 118, Scott Waldo replaced another wooden building with his three-story Waldo Building matching the Andrews Hotel's façade in 1893. Also built during the 1880s and 90s were the Heald Building, 123 E. Grand River, built in 1887; the center two-story True Value building at 139 S. Putnam, 1887-88; the one-time Williamston State Bank Building at 128 S. Putnam in 1888; 151 S. Putnam (now Gracie's Place), the Rice Building at 119 S. Putnam and 140-42 S. Putnam, both constructed probably in the 1880s; the Enterprise Building, 126 S. Putnam, in 1891; and the building at 129 S. Putnam in the 1890s. The last major building project of the nineteenth century in the downtown was the 1899 construction of the Leasia Block at the southeast Grand River/Putnam corner (and extending some distance along Grand River).

Grand River within the business district has been subject to several devastating fires at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first years of the twentieth. A fire in 1895 destroyed a row of wooden buildings along Grand River's north side west of the Andrews Hotel and Waldo Building. In 1915 several wooden buildings along Grand River's south side west of the Bowerman Block burned. Reconstruction took place slowly, typically with one rather than two-story buildings, and some lots remained vacant for years. Buildings dating from the 1900-1920 period that retain their historic character include 122 W. Grand River, the Gorsline Building at 128 W. Grand River, Klunzinger Store at 142 W. Grand River, and Schweitzer Building at 115 W. Grand River.

But the 1920s saw the beginnings of an ongoing pattern of growth. The reconstruction of the old Grand River Turnpike in the 1920s as a paved state trunkline connecting Detroit with Lansing and Grand Rapids (Grand River Avenue in Williamston was paved about 1923) provided opportunities for gas stations, garages, restaurants, and stores serving the new generation of auto travelers passing through the heart of town on Grand River as well as local residents. The rebuilt road also contributed to more of the younger generation making their homes in town rather than moving elsewhere by making it more feasible for residents to work in nearby communities while continuing to live in Williamston. One additional factor may have been the Clay Products plant, which went into operation in 1925 and ran til 1940.

In the 1920s the community experienced its first substantial population increase since the 1880 census, rising to 1458 as of the 1930 census. New development during this time of growth in the 1920s took place primarily along Grand River Avenue and included the Greenaway Store at 126 W. Grand River, the Wood Garage at 160-64 W. Grand River, the King Building and next one to the east at 125 and 133 E. Grand River, and 147 S. Putnam.

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Suburbanization raised the population to 1704 in 1940, 2051 in 1950, and 2214 in 1960. Williamston became a city in 1945. Buildings constructed in the business district during this 1930-60 time period include 146 W. Grand River, the Sun Theater at 150 W. Grand River, the remodeled Peoples State Bank Building at 101 E. Grand River, Enterprise Building at 147 E. Grand River, 151-53 E. Grand River, Hammond Building at 133-35 W. Grand River, 126 W. Grand River, office building at 148 S. Putnam, and Wilton Building at 150 S. Putnam.

In the early 1960s the I-96 expressway was constructed connecting Detroit, Lansing, and Grand Rapids, relegating the old Grand River Turnpike/Grand River Avenue to the status of a local road. The portion of the highway near Williamston, bypassing the city a few miles south of the four corners, was dedicated December 12, 1963. In the wake of the road's opening, business activity in the downtown suffered a significant decline. One response was a Chamber of Commerce-sponsored "Community Project Face Lift" that resulted from discussions begun in 1966 over ways to revitalize the business district. Inspired by similar efforts in Zionsville, Indiana, and Gaylord, Michigan, and assisted by a local architect and a Michigan State University architectural student who worked as volunteers, and using a coordinated color scheme from Sherwin-Williams, the project employed a Colonial theme in updating a number of the downtown store and building fronts. Gov. George Romney came to town to apply the first strokes of paint to City Hall to begin the project in 1968. Two of the business district's key buildings today retain features of the 1968 downtown facelift project. The Bowerman Block (Barrett's) was painted from top to bottom, including the previously unpainted upper façade brickwork; although the paint colors have changed over the years, the entire façade has been painted ever since. The storefronts of the Leasia Building were rebuilt with a Colonial finish that includes shingled walls and pent roofs and the large storefront windows subdivided into small lights.

In the 1970s construction and then expansion of the Meridian Mall about seven miles to the west in the Lansing east-side suburb of Okemos appeared to have a yet more dramatic impact. Local businesspeople and leaders viewed the opening of the mall as a watershed event in the downtown's commercial life since it drew off many of the business district's remaining shoppers.

With many of its traditional businesses gone, downtown Williamston began a gradual reinvention process that continues today. By 1980 antique shops were beginning to occupy some of the storefronts. The economic recovery has gathered steam since the 1990s, as several popular restaurants, a theater company, dance studios, art galleries, and other businesses and activities that attract out-of-town visitors as well as local residents of this far east-side Lansing suburb have made a home here while the long-time movie theater and a 125-year old hardware business also remain in operation within the historic district area.

Commerce

The district's buildings housed much of the community's commercial activity from the later nineteenth century down to the 1960s. As noted in the inventory entries, these buildings contained during the period down to the early 1960s examples of all of the following types of businesses: groceries and meat/butcher shops; clothing and dry-goods stores and shoe/shoe repair, millinery, and jewelry shops; drugstores, hardware and furniture stores/undertaking parlors, and department and variety stores; meat/butcher shops, restaurants, and ice cream/confectionary stores; bars and billiard parlors; livery stables, harness shops, and car dealerships; barber shops; and plumbing and heating and farm equipment stores; and the local telephone office/exchange. Offices, for the most located in upper stories, contained office space occupied by attorneys, insurance and real estate agents, physicians, dentists, and optometrists. Buildings that particularly stand out for housing the same businesses for long periods of time include the True Value Hardware building at 139 S. Putnam, which has housed a succession of hardware stores continuously since its completion in 1888; the corner storefront in the Leasia Building (Keller's Plaza), 100 E. Grand River, which housed drugstores from its construction in 1899 until about 1971 (James Leasia's drugstore had occupied the previous building at this corner location since 1884); and the building at 111 W. Grand River, which has housed Barrett's Clothing since 1927 (the business dating back to 1909). Another long-time business in the district is the Sun Theatre, in operation in the present building since 1946.

Two of the district's building housed Williamston's banks. The earliest bank, the Crossman & Williams Exchange Bank, and its successor, the Peoples State Bank, occupied the building at 101 E. Grand River built for it in 1874 and Peoples the building as remodeled c. 1937 until the mid-1960s. The building at 128 S. Putnam housed the Williamston State Bank from its 1888 construction until it merged with Crossman & Williams in 1937 to form Peoples.

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Four of the district's buildings housed the offices and printing plant of a local newspaper, *The Williamston Enterprise*, at various times.

- 126 S. Putnam, the Enterprise Building, was built in 1891 to house the paper and was its home from then until c. 1905-10.
- 140-42 S. Putnam, served briefly after a 1938 fire that destroyed their previous quarters.
- 138 E. Grand River served as the newspaper's home from 1938 to c. 1951
- 147 E. Grand River was built c. 1951 for the newspaper

Several buildings, including the central part of the 1874 National Block, 109 E. Grand River, 126 E. Grand River, which contained a hotel as of 1910, 138 E. Grand River, which held the Commercial Hotel in the 1890s, and 151 S. Putnam, which contained the American Hotel in the early 1920s, housed hotels in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. By far the most important of the old hostelrys that occupied space in surviving downtown buildings was the Andrews Hotel, 100-108 W. Grand River. Built in 1887, the immense (by Williamston standards) building stands on a key site at the northwest Grand River/Putnam corner occupied as a hotel site since the Grand River plank road was constructed in the early 1850s. Renamed the Hotel Glaser in 1913, the hotel continued in operation well into the twentieth century.

Social History and Entertainment/Recreation

Fraternal organizations formed a key part of the early social history of most communities. Williamston's Masons and Odd Fellows both used a second-floor hall in the building at 139 S. Putnam in the building's early years before the early 1920s. The Masonic temple has occupied the second story of the building at 139-41 E. Grand River since the 1930s.

Movie Theaters

The 1931 Sanborn map shows that the Gem Theater then occupied the middle storefront in the National Block, 109 E. Grand River; it was in operation until about 1942. Sam and Dick Montgomery, who operated the Gem in its later years, built the Sun Theatre, 150 W. Grand River, in 1946. The Sun, with its colorful Moderne front, has remained in operation down to the present except for a few years when it was closed.

Architecture

Williamston's small central business district presents its rightful share and more of visually interesting and architecturally distinguished later nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial buildings. Buildings displaying a considerable variety in architectural styles, materials, and finishes present their facades to the passerby.

Many of the oldest buildings dating from the 1870s to about 1890 broadly exemplify Italianate, the dominant architectural style for commercial buildings across the country from the 1850s to the 1870s and 80s. These buildings are characterized by bracketed roofline cornices and second-story windows with elaborately detailed wood, iron, brick, or stone caps. The 1874 Bowerman Block (Barrett's), 111 W. Grand River, stands out for its two-storefront long size and for the impressive wealth of detailing. This includes the fluted iron storefront columns and paneled piers with their elaborately decorative capitals (such columns were a commonly used feature of Italianate storefronts but have usually been replaced in successive storefront modernizations), the paired bracket cornice with its paneled frieze and modillion band, and, especially, the highly sculptural window caps with their recessed panels and raised "springblock" and "keystone" pieces displaying incised plant detailing.

No. 119 S. Putnam has the round-arch second-story windows, these with raised brick caps, that form a typical Italianate feature. The three decorative "half-windows," the segmental-arch-head half-window-height areas in the brickwork next to and between the windows outlined in more raised brick are a feature seemingly unique to this building.

South Putnam presents a fine display of 1880s and 90s Late Victorian buildings that broadly fit within the Italianate label because of their elaborate bracketed cornices and window caps. Along with 119 they include 139, with its smooth stone slab window caps and beltcourse treatment; 151 (Gracie's), with its bracketed storefront cornice and bay window and incised-detail "cast stone" (i.e. concrete) door and window caps; 114 (1893 Tuttle Block), which retains both its storefront and roofline metal cornices; 126 (1891 Enterprise Building), with its rockface brown sandstone caps and beltcourse; and 128 (Williamston State Bank Building), the most intact of them, with its original storefront ironwork and wood trim still in

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place in addition to the main cornice. The 1893 Waldo Building at 118 W. Grand River and 1887 Heald Building, 123 E. Grand River, are two more fine examples.

The 1874 National Block, 109 E. Grand River, is the downtown's only mansard-roofed "Second Empire" building. The stylistic name refers to the period in French history in the mid-nineteenth century when architecture using the steep-lower-slope mansard roofs was particularly in vogue (the mid-nineteenth-century architecture in France that gave rise to this style in Britain and North America was itself a revival of the architecture of an earlier period in France from the later 1500s). The beautifully refurbished National Block with its tall mansard roofs displaying round-arch dormers is really, like many if not most mansard-roofed commercial buildings from the time, Italianate below the mansard roof, with the bracketed cornices and elaborate window caps characteristic of that style. The mansard roof has the advantage not only of providing a special stylishness to the building but also masks a full additional story of useable space. A mansard-roof Second Empire commercial building in a small-town downtown such as Williamston's is certainly well out of the ordinary.

The 1880s and 90s were a critical period in downtown Williamston's development when, following the opening of a railroad connection, the town and its business district both experienced boom times. Built during this time period, the district's two largest blocks, together with the 1874 Bowerman and National Blocks, visually dominate the four-corner Grand River-Putnam intersection. The 1887 Andrews Hotel building, 100-108 W. Grand River, is massive both in its long frontage on Grand River and in its three-story height, a story taller than nearly every other downtown building. The Late Victorian building's front is notable for its myriad "cast stone" window caps that display more of the incised detailing similar to that seen on a few other downtown buildings and more so for its intricate stacked corbelled and its sawtooth brickwork in the uppermost façade below the cornice. The angled corner and broad side wall facing N. Putnam, with its angled break in the wall plane, add to the building's visual interest. We note and celebrate here again – as the inventory entry reports – the action of local businessmen in 1971 in securing the preservation of this key historic and architectural landmark from demolition for a gas station.

The 1899 Leasia Building (Keller's Plaza), 100-120 E. Grand River, at the southeast corner of S. Putnam, is also massive in size, with greater frontage along Grand River and also extending well south along S. Putnam. The building's façade design spans the transition from Late Victorian design, with its emphasis still on intricate detailing, and early twentieth-century design, which was moving toward greater simplicity both in form and design. The smooth, rounded corner and the big simple large square-head windows, with unadorned tops, point to the future. Even the entirely brick upper façade, though embellished with eye-catching stacked corbelling, dentil-like banding, and molded brick outlining horizontal panels and forming part of the simple cornice, entirely lacks the broadly projecting bracketed cornices so commonly used in Late Victorian buildings constructed only a few years earlier.

Like the Leasia Building, the c. 1890s building at 122 S. Putnam that now houses the Williamston Theatre also displays corbelled and molded brickwork below the eaves – concave-profile bricks outlining the horizontal sunken panels and also blocks displaying curvilinear plant form patterns in the panels themselves and forming a band beneath the parapet cap. While stacked corbelled brickwork below the parapet is frequently found in the commercial buildings of the 1880s and 90s, the use of such molded brickwork is far less common.

In the early twentieth century a gradual transformation in popular taste away from what was increasingly viewed as the excesses of Victorian design brought with it a widespread acceptance of historic design sources such as America's own Colonial and post-Colonial architecture, the Georgian architecture of eighteenth-century England, and English and French Medieval architecture as appropriate models for American architecture. Little evidence of this early twentieth-century nationwide adoption of historicism is present in downtown Williamston – 148 S. Putnam's attractive 1948 wooden Colonial entrance is really the only evidence.

At the same time that architecture modeled after selected historical European styles became so popular, another "style" that used the building materials themselves to provide the decoration also came on the scene. Many buildings in downtown Williamston reflect this non-historic, Arts-and-Crafts-related "Commercial Brick" architecture in its use of patterns formed by the brickwork – such as panels of basketweave or herringbone brickwork or bands formed of or panels outlined by stretcher, header, soldier, and rowlock courses – with square or lozenge-shaped concrete blocks often marking corners, midpoints, or set at regular intervals for decorative contrast. Williamston's examples of Commercial Brick range from the late 1930s Hammond Building, 133-35 W. Grand River, very pleasing in its small scale and simplicity, to the two matching 1920s buildings at 125 and 133 E. Grand River, to the 1926-27 Wood Building, 160-64 W. Grand River. The largest of the district's Commercial Brick buildings, the Wood is notable for using bands of stretcher and soldier bricks to

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outline the door and window openings and for its horizontal panels that, outlined by raised brick of contrasting hue, contain evenly spaced concrete lozenges.

Concrete, used primarily for details such as window caps in the late nineteenth century, came rather suddenly into common use after 1900. Using reinforced concrete for large-scale projects such as factories and warehouses, bridges, and dams and hydroelectric plants became more frequent as the technology of reinforcing concrete with rods and other steel material became better understood. At the same time a much less high-tech form of concrete construction – building using concrete block – became widely accepted because of the low cost of labor and material and the ease of setting up a plant to turn out the blocks. The c. 1912 Gorsline Brothers Building, 128 W. Grand River, may be the district's oldest concrete block building. It uses plain block for the side and rear walls, but, for the front – like many of the other earlier concrete block buildings – employs a more dressy form of block molded with a rockface finish to emulate stone masonry. More often than not from the beginnings of widespread use of concrete block construction down to the 1950s, concrete block was restricted to the side and rear walls, with brick or stone, materials considered more “finished,” used for the front. The 1948 and c. 1950 office buildings at 148 and 150 S. Putnam, respectively, are typical examples from the early post-World War II era that present more dressed-up brick or stone-trimmed brick facades to the streets while the sides and rears are of plain block.

The 1946 Sun Theater, 150 W. Grand River, is another concrete block building, but stands out from the crowd because of its vibrantly colorful Moderne front finished in enameled metal panels in three different hues and its broad and colorful marquee. The late 1930s and the early post-World War II era witnessed an explosion of movie theater building and remodeling, and the result was a proliferation of Moderne movie theaters such as this across Michigan and elsewhere. There is no thematic inventory of Michigan movie theaters that would provide information on the numbers of Moderne buildings like this that once existed, how many are still with us, and how many are still in operation as movie theaters. But experience traveling around the state suggests that the vast majority of the buildings that have survived are in other uses, typically with the once colorful facades drastically remodeled, or have remained vacant for years. Relatively few remain in operation as theaters. Williamston's Sun adds a bright spot of visual contrast and color to the downtown district. The front needs a helping hand – and keeping the building and its historic front intact should be a priority for the community.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Aerial map of Williamston's business district, 1959. In the collection of Wayne Fate, Williamston, Michigan.

"First Friday-Williamston Businesses Family Tree," May 2008, Williamston Chamber of Commerce, with Williamston High School teacher Mitch Lutzke and students John Person and Dan Nix. Pictures and posters posted in store front windows with requests to add data on businesses at this location.

"History of Williamston," Photo Album with commentary by David Jones, Williamston, Michigan. In the collection of the Williamston Depot Museum, August 2010.

Interview-Tracie Baise, co-owner, "Top Flight Financial" store, 123 East Grand River Avenue, Williamston, Michigan, December 29, 2010 by Mitch Lutzke (in-person).

Interview-Tom Cassaday, former occupant and businessman in "109 Building" on East Grand River Avenue, July 27, 2010.

Interview-Dr. Ralph Keller, owner, "Keller's Plaza" (old Leasia Block), 100-120 East Grand River Avenue, December 29, 2010 by Mitch Lutzke (in-person)

Interview-Bev O'Malia, co-owner, "Carriage Travel" (west end National Block), 101 East Grand River Avenue and 110 North Putnam Street, Williamston, Michigan, January 8, 2011 by Mitch Lutzke (in-person).

Interview-Roger Philip, co-owner, "Sign of the Pineapple," 139-141 East Grand River Avenue, Williamston, Michigan, April 9, 2011 by Mitch Lutzke (phone).

Interview-BarbVandenburg, co-owner, "True Value Hardware," 139 South Putnam Street, Williamston, Michigan, April 26, 2010 by Mitch Lutzke (in-person).

Interview-Ally Wendt, owner, "Bloom" store, 118 West Grand River Avenue, Williamston, Michigan, January 8, 2011 by Mitch Lutzke (in-phone).

"Keller's Plaza," by Michael Keller. Unknown date, c.1981?

"Marion Jenkins Lechler, notes to self on downtown Williamston 1908," in the collection of Linda Lechler Siciliano, Williamston, Michigan

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Plat, Parcel A and Parcel B, Keller's Plaza, East Grand River Avenue, Williamston, Michigan, in the collection of Dr. Ralph Keller, Williamston, Michigan.

Plat, Barrett Building, 111 West Grand River Avenue, Williamston, Michigan, in the collection of Tom Mitchell, Williamston, Michigan.

Plat, 1845 Williamston, Michigan. Filed November 22, 1845 with the Ingham County Register of the Deeds, Mason, Michigan. Print #7067.

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Williamston Depot Museum, photograph collection, 369 West Grand River, Williamston, Michigan.

Williamston Depot Museum calendar, 2009, 2010 and 2011 editions. Compiled by Mitch Lutzke.

(Video)

1986 video taped interview conducted by David Jones, with Howard Gorsline, Graham Jackson and "Chick" Greenaway. Recorded in Jones' law office on South Putnam Street in Williamston, Michigan.

(Building descriptions)

Steve Eyke, owner, LaFollette; Architects, Builders, Interior Designers, 145 West Grand River Avenue, Williamston, Michigan, with assistance from Mitch Lutzke, Williamston, Michigan.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
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- designated a National Historic Landmark
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- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

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Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

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Property Owner:

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