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## **PHOTO INVENTORY**

SHPO will need a photographic inventory in color of **all** buildings, structures, and other features in the district – regardless of age – to review the nomination text and to provide the SHPO with a full record of the district’s properties for future tax credit applications and whatever else comes along. The photo inventory should also become a permanent record for your community of the business district’s buildings and other features as they currently exist. As you plan the nomination project, develop a plan for how the products of all this work will be housed in the community so that they are available to public officials and the general public for their future use.

What to photograph:

- Each and every building. Don’t be stingy with photography – digital photography is CHEAP! Shoot a three-quarter view showing the front and side if the building stands on a street corner or open site, a straight-on frontal view, and one of the front from an angle that better reveals the depth of features such as recessed entries, cornices, and moldings. Shoot additional close-up views of the first-floor storefront and other details such as the main cornice, ornamental brickwork, and window caps so you and SHPO will have a complete record for writing and reviewing the nomination’s building descriptions.
- Structures such as bridges.
- Public squares or parks within the district. Include general views and views of individual features such as gazebos and band shells.
- Street furniture and objects such as freestanding clocks, monuments and sculpture, and ornamental fencing.
- Historic brick streets. Document sample street and intersection patterns.

When to photograph:

- Images should be shot when snow is not present on visible roof slopes or ground that shows in the image, if possible.
- Images must be shot in light conditions where details are clearly readable and not obscured by harsh shadows. Take advantage of light conditions: try to shoot the east-facing properties in the morning light, the west-facing ones in the afternoon light. In the winter months, cloudy days tend to work best.

Taking the pictures:

Follow the specs for image file format and resolution set forth in the “Taking the Picture” section of the *National Register Photo Policy Factsheet* at the register’s website, [www.nps.gov/nr](http://www.nps.gov/nr), under Publications, Technical Assistance for Preparing Nominations. Images must be in color and with resolution of no less than 1200 X 1600 pixels at 300 dpi and no greater than 2000 X 3000 at 300 dpi.



Small building, mid-block. Here one straight-on view is adequate.



Typical size 2-story building, mid-block. A straight-on view and some views of details should be shot.



An angled view illustrating the historic storefront details.



A two-storefront building



An upper façade detail illustrating the cornice and window caps.



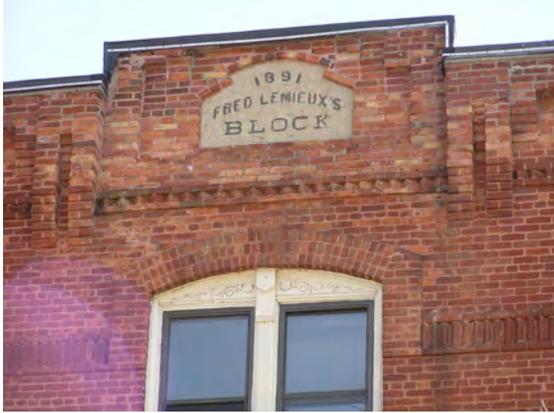
A detail of the same building's historic storefront ironwork, an important feature.



General front view of another building showing basic form but little else.



A separate straight-on front view is also needed here because previous view doesn't show details.



This view shows a name/date plaque and close-up of the brickwork detail on same building..



Side and rear view of same building, providing additional information about the building's form and finishes.



Mid-block building whose front reflects several eras of building.



Angled view that illustrates the form and finish of the storefront



General view of remodeled and expanded building



View showing later rear extension.



Rear view showing the gable-roof rear extension. The same view also provides information about the backs of other nearby buildings.



Rear view of a building row. Rear views can provide information that is not evident in the building fronts.



A large building. A large parking lot directly across the street makes possible a straight-on view.



For large buildings, this kind of angled view is what is more typically available.



For a large building, a detail view of the main entrance may be needed to clearly show the details present there.



Additional views, such as these showing street-level and upper-level façade details, will help in preparing the building description.



For large buildings, a rear view, showing more of the basic form, is important.

### **CD-Rs with Image Files**

The SHPO will require a set of all images in color on CD-Rs as part of the nomination package. The image files on the CDs provided to SHPO should be named in the following format so that they will sort in street and number order:

Street name\_Street direction (N, S, E, W)\_Address number\_Image number (01 etc.) where there are multiple images for the same resource. Use an adequate number of digits for the address numbers to ensure addresses will sort in numerical order.

For example, for 426 W. Smith Street, the first of several images: SmithStreet\_W\_0426\_01.

### **DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ON BUILDINGS AND OTHER FEATURES**

Equally as important as the photographic documentation – you will find this out when you come to write building descriptions for the nomination’s inventory entries (see discussion under **Description** section) maybe months after the photographic survey – is making careful descriptive notes on each building and other surveyed feature.

What to make note of:

- Exterior materials (front, sides and rear). Is the front brick but the sides and rear concrete block? Is the front red brick but the sides and rear yellow-buff brick? Are there decorative details in additional materials such as stone or terra cotta? If the exterior contains stonework, what kind of stone is it (i.e. sandstone, limestone, granite)? List a specific source for stone (i.e. Ionia, Waverly, or Jacobsville sandstone or Bedford limestone, for example) if it can be identified. Are trim items such as the cornice and window caps of wood, metal, or stone? List any makers’ names on storefront columns or other materials.
- First-floor store or shopfronts: Make note of their character and apparent age. For even “modern” – i.e. c. 1970 and later – shopfronts, the building’s inventory entry in the nomination’s description statement will need to include basic information on the shopfront’s design, materials, and apparent age. Your final description for the nomination will need to make note of the storefront’s configuration – how many storefronts across, where are storefront entrances located, are the entrances recessed, are there access doorways to the upstairs? What are the storefront’s basic elements? Iron storefront columns and cornice with

wooden doors, door and window trim, and bulkheads? Aluminum doors and door and window trim? What other finishes are present, such as ceramic tile entry floors containing decorative patterns or old store names in them? Many storefronts contain combinations of features from several time periods.

- Interiors: For the most part, information on interiors is not needed. But: For public buildings and churches that possess notable interior spaces, include descriptive information on these key interior spaces and their features and finishes. For commercial spaces such as stores, barber shops, and bars and restaurants that retain historic features such as old pressed metal ceilings, shelving and fixtures, and backbars and booths, information on these features should be collected and included in the inventory entries.

## **HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

Historical research provides the information necessary for making the case for your business district's eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

The district nomination project will require two types of research:

- Research on the community's and downtown's history in general sufficient to establish the applicable historic contexts within which the commercial district will be evaluated and to establish the district's eligibility within some or all of those contexts. Applicants should become familiar with *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, including section V, How to Evaluate a Property within Its Historic Context (find at [www.nps.gov/nr](http://www.nps.gov/nr)).
- Research to document the histories of the specific buildings and other features in the district.

This information is used for two parts of the national register nomination. Building-specific historical background is incorporated into the inventory entries that follow the overview description of the district in the nomination's description statement. The research on the community's and downtown's history, along with building-specific historical information, is used to develop the nomination's statement of historical significance.

The historical research should utilize whatever documentation is available – to the extent feasible.

- Talk to the property owners, particularly those who have owned their buildings for years. The owners may have documents that provide important historical information on their buildings and may be able to provide important information relating to the construction of the building and about occupants and uses over the years.
- Make use of published sources such as local and county histories and publications issued to commemorate community centennials or other anniversaries. Look at area libraries or historical societies for published and unpublished histories of businesses, organizations such as clubs, fraternal organizations, and churches that have been part of the business district for a long time.
- City directories are useful tools in documenting building uses over the years. In many smaller towns where directories were published only sporadically, old phone books can be

useful. For both the inventory entries and historical narrative, information about original and early uses (the first store in the building, for example), about long time uses (a single store or succession of businesses of the same type that occupied the building for a long period of time), and unusual uses will prove useful.

- Building/remodeling permits. Records of building permits issued by local units of government can provide useful information about new construction and renovations of existing buildings including the date when the permit was issued (usually just prior to the beginning of work), the applicant (the property owner, architect, or contractor), the work to be done, and the estimated cost. Unfortunately local units of government tend to discard building permit records on a regular basis, so that few Michigan communities – Detroit is a wonderful exception, with records dating back to the late nineteenth century – retain these records. Don't expect to be so lucky – but always look for them either with the local government or in local repositories such as historical societies and libraries!
- The original plats that encompass the area included in the business district. These were filed with the county register of deeds. The Archives of Michigan in Lansing also has a nearly complete duplicate set of plats from all parts of Michigan. Essential information for the nomination includes a discussion of the platting history of the business district: What area was encompassed by each of the plats that together covered the district area? When was each plat made or filed, and who were the property owners for each? What are the lot sizes (frontages and depths) and are they uniform throughout the plat? Are street widths uniform or are some wider than others? The nomination's significance statement for a business district will always need to provide information about the platting history and the impact of the early platting on the subsequent physical development of the business district.
- Old maps are a key tool in documenting your business district. Older county atlases, particularly the early ones from the 1850s-70s period, may show building footprints in the business district. This may be useful in helping to document some of the earlier standing buildings and will provide information on the district's state of development at the time that can be used in the significance statement.
- The Sanborn fire insurance maps are a key tool that should always be utilized when they are available. The maps for each community were originally published in book form beginning in the mid-1880s for most Michigan communities and updated periodically. The book versions are hard to find today, but microfilm versions of Sanborn maps for Michigan towns are available at the Library of Michigan and other university and local libraries. Typically what is available for a town are a series of maps from every few years down to about 1930 plus one or two later updates – for Iron Mountain, for example, Sanborns are available for 1884, 1888, 1891, 1897, 1904, 1911, 1923, and 1930, plus an update of the 1930 series with changes down to 1949. The Sanborns show building and property outlines, street addresses, construction (frame, solid brick or brick veneer, and stone), number of stories, and building uses. Occasionally, for more important buildings, the date of construction is listed. These maps are extremely useful in documenting the period during which a specific building was constructed. **Every nomination project should make use of the Sanborn maps when they are available.**

- Old (and not so old) photographs and postcard views are also highly useful tools that should always be used. They can help document when particular buildings were constructed, provide documentation of buildings' uses at various times (this can be especially useful for those towns with only sporadically published city directories), and can provide important records of how building facades and storefronts evolved over the years, showing now missing features of existing buildings. Later (1950s, 60s, and 70s) views can sometimes be as useful as the older ones in showing the major changes to old buildings often made in those days and helping to explain why today's building fronts look like they do.
- Nineteenth-century birdseye views of entire communities usually give prominence to the business district and show what buildings were present at the time the view was made. They can be highly useful tools in understanding the extent of development at the time the view was made and documenting the history of particular parcels and buildings in the business district for the nomination.
- **Newspapers:** The newspapers can be a key source of information about the business district's history. They provide three useful categories of information: (1) about the construction and renovation of buildings and about changes in ownership and use; (2) about specific events – such as fires, road widening projects, or urban renewal – that affected the business district; and (3) about broader historical patterns that, affecting the entire community, had a major impact on development in the business district. In Iron Mountain, for example, the establishment of the huge Ford sawmill and factory complex just south of the city in the early 1920s brought about the “Ford boom” for the area, resulting in a period of extensive building in the downtown.

The older generation of newspapers down to the early twentieth century tend to relegate the kind of building-specific details you seek to columns of local news (often labeled with names like “Local Brevities”). In these local news columns the building information you seek will typically form tidbits – often only a few lines long – interspersed with notes about people visiting friends in other towns and the same short advertisements for local businesses repeated three or four times. The kinds of information these tidbits can provide is illustrated by the following: “Fred Jones has begun work on John Smith's new brick block next to Osbert's drug store. Smith expects to move his grocery in by July 1<sup>st</sup>.” This gives us the owner's name, the name of the builder, the time when the building was constructed, the planned occupant, and a (sometimes needed) clue to the building's location. During the early years of the twentieth century (sometimes earlier), fortunately, actual articles, with headlines, about new buildings, renovations, and new stores tended to replace the references in “Local Brevities” columns, making it easier to spot the information you want (or to see that there was no coverage).

Newspaper research can be time-consuming in the extreme. Ideally, research should include reading the local newspaper from the beginning to the present. But – unless your project includes people who can devote their lives to this work – the project needs to focus on specific time frames. Key landmark buildings including public buildings such as city hall and the library, churches and fraternal buildings, and leading commercial buildings such as banks, hotels, and large store buildings – the kinds of buildings whose dates of construction are generally known up

front – are also the most likely buildings in the business district to have received newspaper coverage when they were built or underwent major expansions and renovations. **The newspapers should always be used to seek documentation for these key buildings.** Searching for information on these will likely result in finding pieces of information about other business district buildings as well. Make use of whatever you find.

Newspaper research can also focus on the period or periods during which the information you have available to you suggests the greatest number of the standing buildings in the district were constructed. For Iron Mountain, for example, the boom period of the early 1920s coinciding with the establishment of the Ford plant would seem to be a fruitful period for newspaper research to locate information on building construction. Another example: in researching Portland’s business district, I began with a statement in the 1880 county history that during 1879 ten brick buildings were constructed in the business district. Starting with the newspaper the first week of March 1880 to catch the beginning of the construction season, I soon found evidence of building plans for sites in the “burnt district”; this set me to looking backwards as well as forward and proved most fruitful both in providing information about a fire that destroyed a large section of the business district and documenting the still-standing buildings that were constructed in the wake of the fire.

### **How Much Research Must We Do?**

The short answer is: Enough to make the case for the district being eligible for the national register. The value of detailed research is that it provides solid documentation of many, even most of the district’s buildings. This will be useful in the future for tax credit projects, for promoting local tourism efforts, for any future local historic district effort, and, generally, for making reliable historical information about the business district available for the future. But – knowing all there is to know about the history of your business district is not essential to successfully nominating the district to the register.

### **How Do We Use the Results of Historical Research in the Nomination?**

The building-specific information is incorporated into Inventory Entries that follow the Overview Description in the nomination’s Description statement. The general background historical information for the community and business district, along with pieces of building-specific historical information, are used to compile the nomination’s Significance statement.

## **PREPARING THE NOMINATION**

The first part of this guide has described the field work – the photographing buildings and other features – and the general and building-specific historic research that needs to be done to provide the information necessary for nominating your business district to the national register. The rest of this guide will explain how you use the results of the field work and research to prepare the national register nomination. It will also set forth several additional tasks that need to be carried out to complete the nomination.

The National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Form 10-900) is available as a downloadable Word template at the register’s website, [www.nps.gov/nr](http://www.nps.gov/nr). Always check the website to make sure you are using the most recent form rather than some outdated version. At

the same site, under Publications, Technical Assistance for Preparing Nominations, you will also find the nomination instruction manual, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* and the *National Register Photo Policy Factsheet*.

## DESCRIPTION STATEMENT

For your business district, the nomination's Description statement will be comprised of two sections, an overview description of the district and inventory entries for all of the buildings and other features.

### Overview Description

The overview description for the district will generally be no more than two pages of single-spaced text in length. It should provide general descriptive information on the district – **avoid discussing history here**. Picture yourself trying to describe the district to a new acquaintance you've encountered on a trip who has never been there – how would you explain to them in an organized fashion what the district looks like and what's visually distinctive about it? That's what needs to be done in the descriptive overview. The overview should describe the following general characteristics of the district in the approximate order in which they are listed:

- General character of district: Is it exclusively commercial or does it include other types of development as well, such as residential or industrial?
- How big is it and what general form: acreage, approximate maximum dimensions, general shape or form, orientation direction (north-south, east-west, etc.).
- Location: Where is it located in relation to the broader community?
- Setting: What is the district's environment like – is it flanked by older residential neighborhoods, factory district, highways, or what?
- Topography and physical features: What is the character of the topography throughout the district, and how do rivers, hills, or other physical features within or adjacent to the district affect its physical form?
- Street plan and public spaces: What is the street plan within the district, what is the character of the streets in general, are there boulevards or other special streetscapes, and are there squares or other public spaces? Do the street plan and public spaces result in vistas and visual focal points within the district?
- Street trees and plantings, pavements, and street furniture: Do shade trees or other plantings along the streets form a significant part of the district's character? Are unusual historic street or sidewalk paving, retaining walls, ornamental fencing, fountains, outdoor public sculpture, old horse blocks or hitching posts, street lighting, or other historic street furniture present?
- Building stock: What is the general character of the district's building stock in terms of property types (such as stores, banks, hotels, public buildings, fraternal halls, and churches), ages, architectural styles and building forms, exterior cladding materials, and scale? What are the most important landmark buildings or other features from a visual standpoint?

The National Register requires that the description statement begin with a single brief paragraph that provides a summary, stand-alone description that, when combined with a similar summary significance paragraph, could stand alone in providing a brief summary statement of the district's character and historic importance. The following are a sample description summary paragraph and then the overview description from the Niles Downtown Historic District nomination:

## **Sample Description Summary Paragraph**

The Niles Downtown Historic District encompasses the city's historic downtown located along a four-block long section of East Main Street together with the first block of the side streets to either side. It contains eighty-six buildings dating from the 1850s to the 1960s that range from one to four stories in height, with two and three-story buildings predominating, and from Greek Revival and Italianate to 1950s and 60s modern in design.

## **Sample Overview Description**

The downtown district is located nearby to the east of the St. Joseph River, which runs in a south-to-north direction through Niles, cutting the city in half on its way to Lake Michigan twenty-five miles to the northwest. Main Street crosses the St. Joseph a half block west of the district and runs east-west through the district. Front Street, the street nearest the river, intersects Main only on the north side, a former southern extension having been erased in the early 1970s by an Urban Renewal project that cleared Main's south side east from the river to the next cross street, 2<sup>nd</sup>. The buildings along Front's west side north of Main form part of the district's west edge. South of Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, the east edge of the Urban Renewal area, forms the district's west edge. Four blocks east of Front, 5<sup>th</sup> Street serves as the district's east edge. The district also includes buildings along the cross streets' first block north and south of Main, but parking lot development in the 1950s and 60s and later has substantially eroded the building stock along parts of some of these streets – thus the irregularity of the north and south boundaries.

East of the district Main Street passes Niles' city all, which occupies the city's most opulent Queen Anne house, with its ample shady grounds; the present public library, built in the early 1960s; a few remnants of the fine homes that once lined the street east of the business district; and modern commercial development that has replaced older housing. Older residential neighborhoods stand to the district's northeast and south, with a mixture of commercial development, vacant lots, and parking lots on the streets behind Main in both directions forming a buffer between the neighborhoods and downtown.

The topography, level as far east as 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, rises rapidly from that point east for two blocks, up to 4<sup>th</sup> Street, where it levels off again to the relatively higher ground on which most of the city's east side stands. From the high ground near the Main/4<sup>th</sup> intersection, a broad vista opens west along Main and across the St. Joseph to the tree-shaded old residential area on the hillside beyond.

The district's oldest buildings – dating mostly, it appears, from the 1850s and early 60s – are of brick construction and stand along Main between Front and 3<sup>rd</sup> and along Front and 2<sup>nd</sup>. The most intact form rows along the west half of the block of Main between Front and 2<sup>nd</sup> and the west half of the block between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> on Main's north side, and on the east side in the south half of the block of 2<sup>nd</sup> north of Main. The early buildings along Main itself are three stories in height. The virtually identical buildings at 105, 107, and 109 exhibit styling in what seems a vernacular version of the Greek Revival, with square-head window openings with low and simple pedimental caps made of iron. Others among these buildings display round-arch windows and other Italianate detailing. The building at 101 East Main must be considered the outstanding example of Italianate among these early buildings because of its surviving storefront ironwork and its upper façade that, faced in light buff sandstone, displays elaborate corbel and keystone-trimmed molded window caps and vermiculated quoins. These early Greek Revival and Italianate buildings, along with the Neoclassical former Newman & Snell's Bank (now Niles Corner) Building at the northwest corner of 2<sup>nd</sup>, visually dominate the district's west end despite the presence there of several large early twentieth-century buildings. Another (Late Victorian) Italianate building, the massive three-story, three-storefront Gitchell Block or Masonic Temple Building, visually dominates the east end of the north side of the 200 block.

In addition to its Italianate buildings, East Main's 200 and 300 blocks contain an architecturally diverse mix of one, two, and three-story buildings presenting mostly early and mid-twentieth-century facades to the street although a number actually date from the nineteenth century. Commercial Brick buildings are present, the largest being the three-story yellow brick White Block, 219 E. Main, with its Sullivanesque terra-cotta trim

blocks. A Sullivanesque decorative vocabulary is also displayed in the terra-cotta roofline ornament on the upper part of the narrow Thayer's façade at 224 E. main. The Burns-Kerr (Van Riper) Building at 313 presents to the street a sunny cream-colored terra-cotta façade containing twisted-column and Gothic effects. One façade and two storefronts on Main (and a third façade around the corner on 2<sup>nd</sup>) exemplify the porcelain enameled metal architecture of the later 1930s to early 1950s, and several other storefronts the crisp design and bare aluminum look current in the later 1940s and 50s. Niles' commercial facades are a museum of storefront design of the early and mid-twentieth centuries.

The solid rows of side-by-side commercial buildings standing on the sidewalk line end west of 4<sup>th</sup> Street. A cluster of larger-scale civic and commercial buildings dominates the high ground at the district's east end. Fronted by areas of lawn behind low retaining walls, the Neoclassical former post office and Carnegie Library buildings, the library's front actually facing 4<sup>th</sup>, stand opposite one another across Main at the northwest and southwest corners of 4<sup>th</sup>, respectively. To the east, the four-story Spanish Colonial-style Four Flags Hotel occupies the southeast corner of Main and 4<sup>th</sup>, with its broad front facing Main and a large wing extending down 4<sup>th</sup>. Just to its east, the Commercial Brick bulk of the Ready Theater fills the remaining Main Street frontage east to 5<sup>th</sup>, the district's east edge. Formerly vacant land opposite the hotel and theater on Main's north side between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> (not within the district) that most recently contained gas stations has recently been developed with a large bank building.

The north half of that block, bounded by 4<sup>th</sup> on the west, 5<sup>th</sup> on the east, and Sycamore Street on the north, stands within the district. Within the half block are the two-story Star Building, a half block long office/commercial building constructed in the 1920s and refaced in modern style in the 1950s, fronting west on 4<sup>th</sup> a little north of the former library, and a Prairie School one-time house, now attached to the Star Building and housing office space. The Niles newspaper's large printing plant, another large Commercial Brick building, extends eastward behind the Star Building mid-block to 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

The first blocks of the side streets reflect the same architectural diversity that is seen along Main, with Italianate, Commercial Brick, 1950s modern, and more present there, including the one previously noted enameled metal panel façade building from the late 1930s. Several 1920s car dealership/garage buildings survive along Front, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Sycamore. The broad, gable-fronted former General Garage at 109 N. 3<sup>rd</sup>, with its side-to-side second-story window band and artful Commercial Brick façade, is the city's landmark among such buildings. Another landmark is the 1920s Ready (Montgomery Ward) Building at the southwest corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sycamore. This massive building displays a Commercial Brick side façade with piers capped with cast concrete ornaments and a double entry storefront with arched central display window. The upper part of its elaborate low stepped-parapet façade is still covered in metal sheeting installed in the late 1960s, as is the façade of another large-scale Commercial Brick building, formerly Troost Brothers Furniture, next door to the south at 214 N. 2<sup>nd</sup>. In both cases the sheathing begs to be removed.

Seven buildings constructed as houses stand within the district as remnants of the residential area that once closely ringed the then smaller downtown. Three of the four nineteenth-century ones are Greek Revival in style. Three others date from the early twentieth century. All but two of the houses have housed commercial or office uses for well over fifty years.

## **Inventory Entries**

The inventory entries include the descriptive information resulting from the survey plus the building-specific historical information. There will be a separate inventory entry for each building, structure, and other feature. They should be organized by streets, listed alphabetically (without regard to compass directions), with each side listed separately so that all odd-numbered and all even-numbered are together rather than interspersed. List East before West, North before South. (This will make finding a specific address and locating information about the properties to either side of it straightforward; other systems such as listing the streets from north to south seem to cause confusion and waste time.)

For the inventory entry, use a four-part format, including a first identification section, followed by a description paragraph, then a paragraph containing the available historical background on the property, and finally any bibliography specific to the property.

1. Identification:

- Historic name/other important names property has had
- Street address
- Date(s) of construction and substantial expansion and/or renovation
- Architect, builder/contractor, artisans if known

2. Description: Include

- Property type (i.e. house, commercial building)
- Number of stories
- Style
- Form, if applicable (gable-front, hip-roof, etc.)
- General footprint, if not otherwise obvious (T-shaped, etc.)
- Exterior materials:

Walls. Identify all by type and color (i.e. red brick with orange sandstone trim); for stone, list specific stone if known (Portage Entry or Waverly sandstone, Indiana limestone, etc.). For masonry walls, indicate bond (such as coursed or random ashlar) and finish (such as smooth or rockface). If side and rear walls are different from the front, provide same information for them.

Foundation. If visible, list material, color, and finish.

Roof. List special materials such as slate or metal shingles if roof is visible. For standard rear-slanting flat-roof downtown commercial buildings, notes on roofing material are not important.

Cornices, cresting, other non-stone trim. Indicate whether wood or metal.

- Ground-floor shop or storefronts

General form (such as “3 bays with slant-sided recessed central entry, 2<sup>nd</sup>-story entry to right”)

Finishes (such as “Aluminum-trim single-light shop windows above modern red brick bulkheads; vertical T-111 siding in transom location; ceramic tile floor in entry containing name ‘Fowler.’”)

- Building interior: Generally, information about interiors is not required. However, for public buildings with significant interior spaces and features, some description is appropriate. It is also appropriate to provide description of unusual historic interior features such as a historic backbar, old pressed metal ceilings, or old store furnishings/fittings.

3. History: Types of information to include when available:

- Original owner and who they were
- Circumstances related to the building’s construction (for example, the present building replaced the same owner’s recently burned previous building at the same site).

- What the building initially housed (such as Smith & Jones hardware downstairs, IOOF hall upstairs), with a summary of any available background history of those businesses, organizations, etc., and time frames for use of the building.
  - Subsequent important uses (especially unusual ones or ones that lasted long periods of time), with date frames.
4. Bibliography: List historical information sources specific to the particular building, such as newspaper notices related to the building's construction. If the documentation includes unique items, such as original plans or historic photos, list the location where the information is housed or the person who provided it. Include owners or others who provided oral history information about the building and briefly cite the type of information provided. **The work of documenting the histories of specific buildings in a business district is time-consuming. Once you have come up with documentation, there is no excuse for not carefully listing the specific sources of the information so that people years in the future can easily verify it. No one in the future should have to start from scratch to locate the same information.**

Format for inventory entries for commercial district nominations (first number is address, under a street name heading):

**128. Smith & Dellenbaugh Block (1880); Ayers & Axtell, Lansing, contractors.**

Two-story seven-bay two-storefront red brick Italianate commercial building; symmetrical upper façade with window bays framed by projecting one brick deep piers running up to corbelled brick frieze with four and two step corbelling in the alternating downward projections and recesses (as in 108 and 118) except for the center bay, which is capped below the frieze by raised brickwork forming an arch; 2<sup>nd</sup>-story windows display chocolate brown Marquette sandstone caps; window caps and main bracketed iron cornice are of the same design as in 108-118; present pent roof and half-timbered Old English storefront for the bar/restaurant that occupies the entire first story dates from between 1973 and 1977.

Dr. Charles C. Dellenbaugh originally owned the building's south section and L. A. Smith the north. Willis M. Elder's drugstore was the initial occupant of the Dellenbaugh section of the building. From the late 1890s or very early 1900s until 1922 the Dellenbaugh's first floor housed Mr. and Mrs. Alphonso Sulpizio's fruit and candy and ice cream store. In 1922 the Sulpizios sold the fruit and confectionary business to Santino Guidi. Under Guidi's ownership, the store acquired the name "Candyland." Jean's Tavern occupied the space during the 1950s and expanded to occupy both storefronts by 1967. Steve and Cindy Fabiano's Fabiano's Restaurant and bar replaced Jean's in 1979, and Amy's, the current restaurant/bar, opened in 1994.

*Obs.* [Observer newspaper], 5/26 and 6/2/1880; 3/9 and 4/13/1922; *History of Portland*, 22; Historical photographs, Amy's Restaurant; Historical Scrapbooks, "Streets – Paving – Etc." [full citations in general bibliography].

### Inventory Entries for Non-Contributing Resources (New and Old)

Inventory entries too often give scant attention to non-contributing resources, whether they are considered non-contributing because less than fifty years old or are older properties viewed as having lost adequate integrity because of extensive alterations. Inventory entries need to provide enough data on non-contributing resources to make clear what they are and why they are non-contributing. This is important both for those properties viewed as non-contributing just because they are not quite fifty years old and for older properties that could be re-evaluated as contributing if appropriate rehabilitation work is done to them.

Properties under fifty years old can become contributing resources once they reach the magic fifty-year age. For that to be possible, the nomination would have to be revised to move the end of the period of significance forward to fifty years ago – and that expansion of the period of significance justified in a revised significance statement. That done, the inventory entries for resources previously listed as non-contributing because not quite fifty years old can then be revised to list them as contributing.

Other types of resources.

These need to be included in the inventory, using the same general format:

- Squares or parks: a general entry for any square or park that provides descriptive and historical overviews followed by bullets for each resource (such as a monument or fountain). Old trees and plantings may be significant features of such public places and may merit a single or multiple bullets.
- Historic pavements such as old brick streets. Standard modern asphalt or concrete pavements should be noted in the district’s descriptive overview but not given separate inventory entries.
- Historic street light fixtures – a single entry that describes, explains where they are located, and provides any historical background. Note the general character of modern fixtures in the district’s descriptive overview only.

## **SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT**

### **What the Significance Statement Should Be**

The significance statement is like a legal brief or a term paper: it argues a specific case for how the district being nominated meets the criteria for listing in the national register, marshalling the facts to make the case. It begins with a brief summary of the case for the district being significant – i.e. meeting the criteria – then provides historical background necessary for making the case, and then makes the case for each applicable criterion. Rather than a narrative chronological history of the town, it should focus on the district. It should be organized by historic theme and, for each, provide background relevant to the district and its buildings relating to that theme and explanations of how the buildings contribute to the district’s significance under the theme.

Downtown commercial districts can be historically significant under criteria A, B, and C, and in terms of various historical themes – most typically Commerce, Politics/Government, Social History, Entertainment/Recreation, and Architecture.

Most old downtowns possess historic significance under the **Commerce** theme in the following ways:

- The district’s buildings will generally possess a collective significance under Commerce for together housing much of the community’s commercial activity from the date of the oldest surviving building to the standard cutoff date for the period of significance under the register’s criteria, fifty years ago, or down to some other more recent date marking the end of an important period of downtown development that the nomination can justify.

- Individual buildings within the downtown may possess significance under Commerce as well for:
  1. Housing stores, banks, or other businesses that were leading downtown commercial institutions in their day.
  2. Reflecting continuity of uses over long periods of time – a building housing a single store or business or a succession of businesses of the same type (such as drugstores) over a long period of time.

Under **Politics/Government**, downtowns typically possess historic significance for containing buildings in long use by government – such as a village or city hall, the county courthouse, post office, or armory. The significance relates to the long-term use, but may also relate to important events that took place at or involved the buildings.

Downtowns also possess historical significance under the related themes of **Social History** and **Entertainment/Recreation**. A downtown district typically possesses several or even many buildings that contribute to its significance under the themes.

- Under Social History, most downtowns retain buildings built for or long occupied by fraternal organizations such as the Masons, Elks, Odd Fellows (IOOF), Knights of Pythias, or Woodmen of the World or by clubs or other social or cultural organizations. In addition, some downtown buildings also typically contained at one time halls or other spaces used for a broad variety of meetings and social events such as political or labor meetings and church socials.
- Under Entertainment/Recreation, downtowns typically contain old buildings once used as opera houses, theaters, or movie theaters or that housed bowling alleys, dance halls, or other spaces used for events that fit better under Entertainment/Recreation than Social History.

Most districts possess significance in terms of **Architecture**. Again, the significance is in part a collective one – the buildings together reflecting broad trends in American and Midwestern commercial (and perhaps other) architecture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Individual buildings may also possess importance as outstanding examples (in the local or perhaps in a broader context) of particular architectural styles, building forms, works of their architects, or for other reasons.

Under each of the applicable themes, the narrative must provide background history on the theme as it relates to the specific district properties to make clear why the district properties are historically significant under the theme.

As in the Description Statement, the Significance Statement must begin with a single paragraph that provides a summary of the case to be made in the subsequent narrative for the district being eligible for the national register.

Below are a sample summary paragraph and significance narrative for the Greenville Downtown Historic District.

### **Sample Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Greenville Downtown Historic District meets national register criterion A for comprising an area that has served as Greenville's central business district and community focal point since its establishment during Greenville's founding years in the early 1850s. The district contains commercial buildings dating back as far as 1869 and from the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that reflect that long history and that collectively have housed much of the city's commercial activity and many of the city's leading commercial institutions over the years. The downtown's business blocks, housing various meeting spaces in their upper stories during past years, hosted much of the city's social, cultural, and entertainment activity. Many commercial buildings and, especially, the city's Danish Brotherhood Hall, possess historical associations with a Danish community that has existed in the city since the 1860s. Downtown Greenville's commercial buildings meet criterion C for collectively representing a broad range of later nineteenth and early and mid-twentieth-century commercial architecture forms and styles, and several of the Italianate and Late Victorian buildings possess significance in the local context of their architectural styles as outstanding examples. Two nineteenth-century church buildings and one early twentieth-century house meet criterion C individually for their architectural distinction. The district also possesses significance under criterion B for containing at least two buildings, the Rutan Block and the Ranney House, that possess direct historical associations with Manning Rutan and Frederick E. Ranney, persons of special significance in the early history of the downtown and city in general.

### **Sample Significance Statement**

[Beginning: A brief historical overview of the community as a whole that provides the background necessary for understanding the downtown's historical development. It discusses early settlement, establishment of government, key factors in early and later 19<sup>th</sup>-C. development (lumbering, railroad development, and agriculture in this case), and an ethnic pattern significant in the area's and downtown's historical development. This is a sample, and the overall length needed will vary.]

Greenville began in 1844 with the arrival of the first settler, John Green, and his family from Fulton County, New York. The site was described as being at the time of settlement "an unbroken plain dotted here and there with clumps of underbrush, while north of the bridge [i.e. Flat River] only a dense forest met the eye" ("Greenville – By Gone Days"). That year Green and Samuel Demorest built the first of a number of sawmills at what became known as Green's Mills along the Flat River at the north edge of the new settlement. A year later a second sawmill was built at the settlement's south end. That year, 1845, the location became part of Montcalm Township, which then encompassed the whole of Montcalm County. The county was created as a geographical unit in 1831, when the territory was still an unbroken wilderness, but was not established as a political unit until 1850. Before that Montcalm Township was attached to Ionia County, its neighbor to the south. Eureka Township, which contained the new settlement, was one of several townships separated from Montcalm at the same time the county became a legal entity.

In 1850 newly established Eureka Township had a population of 461. In 1853 John Green and Manning Rutan platted adjacent areas in what is now Greenville centered on Lafayette Street. As of 1860 the settlement contained about 400 persons out of the township's population of nearly 1000. The 1850 act incorporating Montcalm County established Greenville as the temporary county seat until 1860. In 1860 the county voters approved moving the county seat to a location more central in the county that subsequently became the village of Stanton, the present county seat.

Lumbering and wood products manufacturing soon became Greenville's economic mainstays. In the community's earliest days the mills cut mostly for the local market, with the surplus being rafted down the Flat and Grand rivers to where it could be sold, but soon the local lumbermen were looking for a larger market. An 1869 *Greenville Independent* article on "The Lumbering Region of Flat River" stated that the white pine region along the Flat and its tributaries extended twenty-one miles north and seven east from Greenville and that logging activities thus far had barely begun to tap this resource. Cutting the pine north of town along the Flat River and tributaries began in earnest in the winter of 1865-66, with a first log drive on the Flat River in 1866 bringing 35,000,000 feet of logs successfully down that and the Grand River to Grand Haven (Schenk, p. 374).



A second firm, the Gibson Refrigerator Company, was founded in 1908 by Greenville men's clothier and banker, Frank S. Gibson. The 1918 Sanborn map shows Gibson's as by far the largest factory complex in town. Switching over to metal by the 1930s, the company became one of the nation's largest manufacturers of refrigerators and Greenville's largest employer during the rest of the twentieth century. A third firm, the Consolidated Soda Fountain Corporation, manufactured ice boxes for soda fountains beginning in the 1910s. The Gibson Refrigerator Company's closing in the early 2000s ended over a century of refrigerator manufacturing in Greenville.

In the early twentieth century important industries in Greenville also included the Greenville Implement Company and the Moore Plow and Implement Company, manufacturers of agricultural implements, and the R. J. Tower foundry and machine shop. The Federal-Mogul Corporation, manufacturers of marine parts, opened its substantial plant during the 1930s.

Greenville forms a part of a substantial Danish settlement that occupies much of Montcalm and adjacent counties. Danish migration to the United States, virtually nonexistent before the 1840s, grew rapidly in subsequent decades due to urban growth and unemployment and rural impoverishment and lack of land. The loss of the southern province of Holstein to the Prussians in the mid-nineteenth century and the additional loss of south Schleswig, north of Holstein, in the wake of the 1864 Danish defeat by the Prussians and Austrians resulted in increased migration of ethnic Danes from those areas. The Montcalm County Danish settlement began with the arrival of a few Danes in the Gowen area, north-northwest of Greenville, in 1853. It expanded rapidly by word of mouth. By 1857 forty Danes were living at the "Big Dane Settlement" around Gowen. In the late 1850s a "Little Dane Settlement" began to coalesce just north of Greenville. Colonies as well as individuals continued to settle in the 1880s and 90s, and Greenville itself contained a substantial Danish population by the end of the nineteenth century. In Greenville Danish Lutherans established a predecessor to the present St. Paul's Lutheran Church in the 1870s and founded Danish Brotherhood Lodge No. 70 in 1893.

Greenville calls itself Michigan's Danish Festival City today. The city has held an annual Danish Festival since 1965.

[Then comes the discussion of the physical development of the business district. The sample begins with platting/the early street plan. It then discusses the beginnings of development of the business district, sets forth important factors that influenced the future development (here the new availability of brick, imposition of fire laws, and additional railroad development). It sets forth the further development that took place in the district during its prime building years (corresponding with the district's period of significance). Finally, it explains what the business district has experienced in terms of development pressures and economic uncertainties since the end of the period of significance.]

### **The Greenville Business District**

Lafayette Street, Greenville's main street, and Washington, Cass, and the other streets that cross it at right angles were among the original streets platted by John Green and Manning Rutan in 1853. Prior to Greenville's incorporation as a village in 1867, Eureka Township built the first Lafayette Street bridge across the Flat River at the north edge of the village in 1856-57. Another wooden bridge replaced this first one in 1868 and an iron bridge replaced that one in 1885.

A business district began to develop along Lafayette in the 1850s and 60s, with stores concentrated in the block between Washington and Cass streets and intermixed with houses farther north and south. Lots along Lafayette varied in width from block to block as different owners subdivided larger lots, but averaged twenty to twenty-four feet in street frontage. As originally platted, a public square twelve rods (198 feet) square marked the Lafayette/Washington intersection, with the streets crossing in the center, thus leaving a four-rod square space at each corner. Public squares of this configuration are common in some other states, including Indiana, but in Michigan they are rare – Marshall, Coldwater, and Vermontville are examples – and the other

Michigan examples noted all have substantially larger dimensions. If Greenville's, platted when the town was the county seat, was intended as a courthouse square, it is difficult to see how it could have served that purpose. In any event, this very small square came to be viewed as serving no purpose – the *Independent* said it was called a public square only “by way of compliment” (3/9/1869). In March 1869 the village vacated it, turning the property back to private ownership.

The oldest surviving photograph of downtown Greenville, a c. 1867 photo looking across the square, shows wooden gable and falsefront stores, primarily of two-story height. Other old photographs and post card views show a variety of one and two-story wooden buildings standing cheek by jowl with the later brick ones. The last two intact examples of the early wood buildings survived side-by-side until the early 1960s along Lafayette's east side at nos. 118-20.

The growing logging boom, rapid settlement and agricultural development of the country, and, especially, it seems, the anticipated completion of the railroad into Greenville set off a building boom in the late 1860s. The Lafayette Street business district, previously a patchwork of one and two-story wooden buildings, was radically transformed in character beginning about the time of the village's incorporation in 1867. Three developments helped spur this redevelopment.

The first was the opening of a local brickyard in July 1867. Before this brick had to be hauled to Greenville by wagon from Ionia, the location of the nearest brickyard and railroad connection. The *Independent* (7/30/1867) reported that brick from the local Westover & Clement yard cost little more than the cost of transporting brick from elsewhere.

The second was the village's establishment in November 1868 of a fire district along Lafayette between Benton Street (south of the district) and the Flat River (to its north) and including the first block of the side streets to either side that prohibited the construction, enlarging, or moving in of wooden buildings without prior approval by the village trustees (*Independent*, 12/1/1868). Unlike many other communities of sizes ranging from Chicago down to Portland, Michigan, which adopted fire districts following catastrophic fires, Greenville had suffered no such disaster. No mention is made in the local newspaper of the circumstances that led to enactment of Greenville's ordinance. In the wake of the new ordinance the local brickyard, by now owned by Clement & George and R. H. Thompson, planned improvements for the coming year so that they could make 8,000 brick per day (*Independent*, 12/29/1867).

A third was the opening of the railroad line to Greenville late in 1870. This development would have greatly reduced the cost of shipping brick and other building materials to the city from Ionia and other places in west Michigan.

The post Civil War logging – and population – boom resulted in a construction boom in the business district, and the developments noted above ensured that the new buildings would be of brick. The downtown's first brick commercial building, the three-story single-storefront Fargo & Belknap Block at 332 S. Lafayette, was built in 1869 by Hiram B. Fargo and James W. Belknap, whose grocery and dry goods store occupied the first floor. Standing at the northeast corner of Lafayette and Washington, it occupied a prime location in one of the four vacated sections of the former public square. In 1871-72 the two store buildings of the same exterior design next door to the north at 328 and 330 S. Lafayette were built, the three together forming what was soon being called the Post Office Block because the post office occupied one of the storefronts (the middle, no. 330).

Another of the earliest brick blocks is the 1870-71 Rider & Potter Block at 301 S. Lafayette (southwest corner of Cass) built for Myron Rider and Thomas J. Potter. The building has a commanding presence because of its large footprint, fifty-foot height that makes it still the tallest building along Lafayette in the business district, and special features that include oculus windows above the regular third-story windows (a unique feature among downtown buildings) and a large wooden main cornice.

By 1875 about twenty substantial brick “blocks,” often of three-story height and two storefronts in frontage width, stood along Lafayette in the core commercial area between Washington on the south and Montcalm on the north. The largest, the 1872-73 Eureka Block, extended for five storefronts, or 110 feet, along Lafayette's

west side north of Washington, and another three-story three-storefront block, built in 1875, stood at Lafayette and Montcalm's northwest corner. These buildings have not survived, but fifteen of the brick blocks built in those years do still stand, including the Post Office and Rider & Potter blocks mentioned above and the three-story two-storefront Walker & Clough (1873), Norton & Ecker (1874), and Rutan (1875) blocks at 102-104, 225-27, and 400-404 S. Lafayette, respectively.

The national economic downturn that began in 1873 caught Greenville in the middle of the building boom. Two large buildings were constructed in 1874 and one single-storefront block in 1875. Thereafter no new downtown building seems to have taken place until the mid-1880s.

A new era of building took place in the downtown from the mid-1880s into the early 1890s. During this time period at least a dozen buildings were constructed, including the 1887 two-storefront Slawson Block at 300-302 S. Lafayette and the Edwards, Anderson, and Harris Blocks at 216-224 S. Lafayette, built in the 1890-93 period.

The Grabill Block at 226 S. Lafayette seems to have been the first built of this new Late Victorian generation of downtown brick blocks. Elliott F. Grabill, editor and proprietor of the *Greenville Independent*, had this building constructed shortly after his appointment as the Greenville postmaster to house the post office, a bank, his newspaper plant, and rental office space. The post office occupied the building in November 1884. A postmaster's salary was based on the business volume of the office, and the postmaster was expected to defray all office costs, for space, equipment, and personnel, out of the salary. Thus there was every incentive for the postmaster to use his own building rather than rent quarters.

Grabill's building is important through the association with the man and because of its interesting early history. E. F. Grabill did several years' service in the Civil War, ending the war as a major. He fought at Gettysburg, Wilmington, North Carolina, and in other key battles. Marrying a Greenville woman in 1865, he settled there after the war and took charge of the *Independent* in 1866. He was an outspokenly partisan Republican who used the paper to regale his readers with a steady diet of party politics and news of soldiers' reunions and other events dominated by the Republican faithful. Grabill was appointed postmaster in March 1883 under the Republicans, but in 1885 Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, came into office as President. A victim of the political "spoils system" – to the victor belong the spoils – Grabill was removed from office in November 1885, and a Democrat appointed in his place. During 1886 the post office moved out of his building. The 1889 election returned the Republicans to power. In April 1890, following an advisory election by Greenville's Republican voters that selected him over another Republican candidate, C. L. Rardon, by a vote of 269 to 224, Grabill was reappointed postmaster. Moved back into the Grabill Block, the post office remained there until it outgrew the space in 1907. E. F. Grabill ran the *Independent* from this building into the twentieth century (*Independent*, 11/6, 11/13, and 11/20/1884; 11/4/1885; 7/8/1886; 3/13, 3/27, and 4/17/1890; 1/30, 7/17, and 7/31/1907).

Part of the impetus for the 1880s-90s new wave of building begun with Grabill's block was a series of fires. Large-scale fires along Lafayette in 1884, 1887, and 1888 destroyed substantial segments of the older wooden commercial building stock (the 1884 fire burned five buildings and the 1887 eight).

The largest of these fires took place on the evening of March 31, 1887, and destroyed the seven or eight frame buildings on Lafayette's east side where 310-324 S. Lafayette are located along with the Exchange Hotel located across the street. Only two weeks after the fire the *Independent* was reporting that all but two of the property owners had already made plans to rebuild. Excavation work began early in June and the local brickyard burned its first kiln of 100,000 bricks later in the month. The owners worked together to provide a uniform façade to what was really a row of seven separately owned buildings. A contract to erect the block was awarded to H. G. Wright & Co. early in July and the buildings completed at about the end of the year.

The gradual process of more intensive development along Lafayette, replacing wooden buildings one by one with masonry ones, was ongoing in the 1890s and into the twentieth century, but seemingly without the construction spurts that took place during the 1870s to early 1890s. The Callaghan, Smith Hardware, and Church Blocks at 113-15, 117, and 305 S. Lafayette were all built in the 1892-1900 period; the Winter Inn in 1901-03 (replacing the previous hotel on the site, which burned in 1900); the Winter Block, 100 S. Lafayette,

in 1903; the Kemp-Gilmour Block, 212-14 S. Lafayette, in 1906; the Backus Block, 129 S. Lafayette, c. 1907; Gleason Building, 110 S. Lafayette, in 1913; Hansen Building, 131-35 S. Lafayette, in 1917; Hopkins Building, 112 S. Lafayette, in 1922; and Greenville National Bank, 127 S. Lafayette, in 1930. The early twentieth-century development included a number of garage and car dealership buildings, most of them located along Lafayette at the district's north and south edges. A major exception is the 1917 Rasmussen Building. Located in the heart of the downtown at 128-32 S. Lafayette, it housed a large rental commercial space in addition to a garage and Ford dealership. The Greenville National Bank seems to have been the last downtown commercial building constructed before the 1930s depression brought further building activities to a halt.

Although there was considerable new development in the years after World War II, that development seemed to continue the early twentieth-century pattern. There was no single large-scale new development downtown, but rather a slow, spotty process of replacing older buildings here and there, especially the remaining old wooden buildings, and filling the few previously vacant sites. By the early 1960s nine new commercial and office buildings had been built along Lafayette and West Cass streets and many additional buildings modernized.

Since the early 1960s few new buildings have gone up along Lafayette within the old core area of the downtown. In 1982 the former Phelps Hotel, one of the buildings constructed following the March 1887 fire, also burned. The ruins remained standing until 1988 when, with state assistance, they along with the early 1870s five-storefront long Eureka Block to its south, at the northwest corner of Lafayette and Washington, and the nearby Silvers Theater were all torn down, leaving a large open space at the south end of the business district on Lafayette's west side that has remained a parking lot since then. The downtown has suffered from the development of a shopping center area out Washington Street at the city's west edge. New development in the 1980s and 90s has tended to involve renovation – most of it unsympathetic to the underlying historic character. The rehabilitation of the former Greenville State Bank complex a few years ago represented the first use of the federal historic preservation tax credits in Greenville. It will hopefully lead to additional future projects that will result in economic development along with protection of the downtown's historic character.

[Next should come the discussion of important historic themes (or “areas of significance”) as reflected in the district's standing buildings. For a downtown district whose reason for being was commerce, the theme of Commerce will always be a key one – one that should be presented first. Significance under Commerce is reflected in the overall pattern of the business district being the commercial center for the community for a long time, in specific businesses being leaders in their field or being in business for long periods of time, and in specific buildings housing the same business or type of business (such as a succession of drugstores) for long periods of time. It is CRITICAL to the success of the nomination to relate the history presented in this and all the thematic discussions to the buildings standing within the district that housed these activities.]

### **Commerce**

By the late 1860s Greenville's commercial district supported a broad variety of businesses, including groceries and dry-goods stores; bakeries; hardwares and agricultural implements dealers; clothing, millinery, and boot and shoe stores; watch and jewelry shops; harness shops; and book and stationary stores. There was at least one restaurant separate from those in the hotels and a number of saloons, most of them apparently located around the fringes of the business district to the north and south of the historic district area. A few barber and tailor shops and other small businesses, including at least one photographic studio, were present. Blacksmith shops, livery stables, and at least one monument works were also located mostly around the business district's edges. The core area of Greenville's downtown along Lafayette between Montcalm on the north and Washington on the south contained the largest part of the city's commercial activity and most of the early city's leading businesses. The ongoing redevelopment of the business district, with larger brick buildings placed side by side replacing mostly smaller wooden ones, supported a growing number and variety of stores in the 1880s, 90s, and later, but the core business district area remained largely within the boundaries encompassed by the historic district until

well into the twentieth century. The following is a sampling of businesses housed in the surviving nineteenth-century commercial buildings in their early years:

Chapin Bros. grocery, 102-104 S. Lafayette (1873)  
Connell & Hansen furniture store, 106-108 S. Lafayette (1875)  
Lars Hansen grocery and flour and feed store, 210 S. Lafayette (1874)  
John Avery & Son drug store, 216 S. Lafayette (1890)  
L. H. Wright meat market/Anderson Meat Packing Co., 218-20 S. Lafayette (1890)  
Harris Bazar (home furnishings, furniture, bazaar goods), 222 S. Lafayette (1892)  
J. H. Edsall restaurant, 224 S. Lafayette (1893)  
G. R. Slawson Co. drug store, 300 S. Lafayette (1887)  
D. S. Seaman grocery, 302 S. Lafayette (1887)  
S. R. Stephens, boots and shoes, 304 S. Lafayette (1873)  
Cole & Taylor drug store, 328 S. Lafayette (1872)  
Fargo & Belknap grocery, dry goods and books and stationary, 332 S. Lafayette (1869)  
E. Rutan & Co., hardware and stoves, 400 S. Lafayette (1874)  
Stevens Hardware, 117 S. Lafayette (1890s)  
James Miller clothing, 225 S. Lafayette (1874)  
George Faber, boots, shoes, and rubber goods, 307 S. Lafayette (1885)

One of Greenville's leading early commercial institutions was the Jacobson's dry-goods establishment founded by David Jacobson in 1873. Jacobson, a Polish Jew born in 1850, came to the United States in 1866 and made his way to Detroit and then to Greenville (*Headlight Flashes*). A brief notice in the 9/11/1884 *Independent* stated that Jacobson had been in business in Greenville over thirteen years; thus he must have moved here by at least 1871. The store gave its founding date as August 1873 (*Greater Greenville*). Advertisements in 1877 list a Jacobson & Clegman dry-goods, fancy goods, and millinery store, but in 1879 Jacobson and Jacob Netzorg established Jacobson & Netzorg, the "New York Store" (*Independent*, 5/17/1877 and 4/17/1879). Prior to the fire of March 31, 1887, that destroyed the row of buildings where 310-20 S. Lafayette now stand, the J & N store occupied the Potter Block, 301 S. Lafayette, for a time, but in the wake of the fire they occupied a double storefront building at 312-16 S. Lafayette in January 1888. In 1893 Jacobson & Netzorg dissolved their partnership. Jacobson kept the old store, while Netzorg moved back into the Potter Block (*Independent*, 10/11/1893; 1/17 and 3/21/1894). By the early 1900s Jacobson's, calling itself "The Big Store," expanded into the adjoining buildings, ultimately occupying 310-18 S. Lafayette. By 1912 David Jacobson had dropped out and Joseph J. and Henry S. Jacobson, probably David's son and grandson, ran the business. Henry Jacobson closed the store in April 1921 and moved to Detroit (*Independent*, 3/30 and 3/31/1921). The former Jacobson Block at 312-16 and the other buildings that also housed the business still stand, but were re-faced c. 1960-61 so that nothing of their historic appearance is now visible.

Another building that housed several commercial enterprises of special historic significance to Greenville is the Rutan Block at 400-404 S. Lafayette. It was built for Manning Rutan, who arrived in Greenville in 1851 the owner of lands that included much of the site of the future town. Rutan platted the area that included the part of the business district on the east side of Lafayette Street in 1853 and, establishing one of the first stores, became a successful merchant. Rutan had this building constructed in 1873-74 on a part of the former public square deeded back to him when the city abandoned it. It initially housed the E. Rutan & Co. hardware and stove business in which his son, Eugene, was a partner.

For a period in the early twentieth century the building housed Francis O. Lindquist's Canada Mills Company. The company, established by Lindquist about 1906, sold suits, coats, and other clothing by mail order under the "The Man from Michigan" label, the building serving as the company's original headquarters, factory, and shipping point for merchandise and also containing a large retail store (*Greater Greenville*). Lindquist, who reportedly began his career in clothing as a clerk at the Star Clothing Company in Grand Rapids, parlayed his success into a term in the U. S. Congress in 1913-14 (*Independent*, 4/16/1913). In 1915 the growing business moved to Grand Rapids, but the Rutan Block continued to house a store. Two other clothing manufacturers followed Canada Mills in using the building during the 1920s. From 1927 until 1990 the building housed another long-term and large-scale business, the Greenville Furniture Company (Elsie McNeil notes).

The business district continued to expand in the number and variety of stores in the early years of the twentieth century as the city itself grew with the city and area's industrial and agricultural development. In addition to a growing number of stores of the standard types already present for decades such as groceries and drug, dry-goods, clothing and millinery, shoe, furniture, and jewelry stores, the downtown area also attracted new businesses such as music stores and fruit and candy stores. Restaurants, smoke shops, and billiard parlors also assumed more of a presence in the central part of the business district in the early twentieth century than previously.

In addition to locally owned stores, the early twentieth century saw the coming of the first chain stores. The grocery chains seem to have been the first, with an A & P store in operation in the 1920s at 202 S. Lafayette and at 135 S. Lafayette between 1930 (*Daily News*, 11/25/1939) and 1937. A & P opened one of the community's first two super markets in 1937 at 101-103 S. Lafayette (a Meijer super market on N. Lafayette north of the district opened a few days before A & P). Kroger's had their store at 318 S. Lafayette from the late 1920s to about 1936 and then occupied 135 S. Lafayette until moving to the then new Carter Building at 309-11 in 1947. In the late 1920s Fidelity Stores ran a short-lived department store at 332 S. Lafayette, perhaps the first non-grocery chain store in Greenville. In 1930 McLellan's Variety and the J. C. Penney Co. opened side-by-side large stores at 310-12 and 314-16 S. Lafayette, respectively, that served as mainstays of the business district until the late twentieth century. The Gambles department store, Western Auto, and Ben Franklin Stores also opened stores on Lafayette in the 1930s or early 1940s.

[Banks form one aspect of Commerce, but providing a separate discussion makes sense for business districts that contain several historic bank buildings.]

### **Banks**

Banks formed a part of Greenville's commercial life beginning in the 1860s. The first bank established was the Charles J. Church & Co. private bank, founded in 1861. Greenville's banks, like banks everywhere, took up highly visible quarters in some of the city's most substantial buildings, generally sited overlooking key intersections in the business district. M. H. Norton & Co., another of these early private banks, is one example. The Norton & Ecker Block, at the northwest corner of Lafayette and Cass, was built with the bank's requirements in mind, and M. H. Norton occupied the corner storefront when that building was constructed in 1874.

The First National Bank, organized in 1872, occupied quarters in the Eureka Block when that building, Greenville's largest, with five storefronts extending northward from Washington on Lafayette's west side, was completed in 1873. In 1884 the bank moved into quarters designed for them in the new Grabill Block at Lafayette and Cass's northeast corner, opposite the old M. H. Norton & Co. location in the Norton & Ecker Block. The same Grabill Block quarters were later occupied by the C. J. Church & Co. Bank and its successor, the Greenville State Bank, until 1914. Established around 1895, the State Bank (renamed the First State Bank of Greenville in 1914) bought the Rider & Potter Block, 301 S. Lafayette, in 1913 and occupied it as their quarters – in more recent years under the Old Kent and then Fifth/Third names – from 1914 until 2002, expanding into 303-305 S. Lafayette in 1951 and into 307 S. Lafayette in 1974.

The small terra-cotta-clad building at 127 S. Lafayette is another old bank, constructed in 1930 to house the Greenville National Bank, and the present large Huntington Banks building at 203-209 S. Lafayette, constructed in 1984, incorporates another, the former Backus Block, built in 1902 to house the then newly established Commercial State Savings Bank (*Independent*, 2/23, 5/7, and 9/10/1902).

[The offices of various types that tended to occupy upstairs spaces in business buildings formed a historically significant aspect of most business districts' activity that merits discussion as part of the district's significance. The discussion of offices seems to fit best under the general category of Commerce despite the fact that the offices often housed a broad variety of professionals, including medical practitioners.]

## Offices

The professional directories published in the weekly newspaper and occasional newspaper notices show that various attorneys, real estate and insurance agents, doctors and dentists, and other professionals had their offices in downtown Greenville in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and generally occupied the upper stories of commercial buildings. The few who paid for listings and who received mention in the paper were likely among the leading firms and may represent the tip of a much larger “iceberg” of professionals. For example, Ellsworth & Lewis, attorneys, and Crane Bros., insurance agents, occupied office space in the second story of the Rider & Potter (Potter) Block at 301 S. Lafayette early in 1871 when that building was completed. This must have been some of the most exclusive office space in the city then. Less than four years later, when the Norton & Ecker Block was built directly across Cass Street from their current quarters, Ellsworth & Lewis with another attorney, Dexter T. Sapp, moved into new quarters in that building’s second story designed especially for them (*Independent*, 1/24/1871; 8/12, and 11/4/1874). In May 1873 the E. H. Jones & Co. real estate and abstract office was about to move into the nearly finished Eureka Block (*Independent*, 5/7/1873). In late 1884 the newly completed Grabill Block contained second-floor offices for Dr. C. M. Martin and Hall & Gracey, insurance agents, and in late 1906 the newly finished Kemp & Gilmour Block contained offices for C. L. and C. B. Rarden, attorneys, and Dr. M. G. Hillman, dentist, and Dr. F. J. Fralich (*Independent*, 11/13/1884, 12/5/1906).

Unlike most of the city’s professional people at the time, realtor and insurance agent F. A. Gleason built his own building. In 1913, following a fire, Gleason built the one-story building at 110 S. Lafayette that now forms the north end of the Huckleberry’s restaurant and bar. Gleason, most atypically, had a ground-floor office (*Independent*, 3/5, 5/28, and 9/10/1913).

### “Professional Row”

The early 1950s saw the development of the block of West Cass Street between Lafayette and Franklin as “Professional Row.” The *Daily News* of June 10, 1950, coined that term in response to the growing concentration of doctors and dentists establishing offices there. In an earlier day most doctors and dentists may have practiced out of their homes. At least there is little evidence that any of them had downtown offices.

In the early twentieth century the house at 118 West Cass served as the residence of dentist Dr. W. L. Rarden and attorney C. L. Rarden. Dr. Rarden built the small concrete block building next door east of the house at 116 West Cass to serve as his dentist office in 1913 and was still in practice there into the 1930s. Dr. Harold B. Juhlin, an osteopathic physician, had his office in the former house at 120 West Cass by 1949.

During 1950 the street underwent the building boom that led to the *Daily News*’ “Professional Row” sobriquet. First to build was Dr. D. O. Ostrander, a dentist, who occupied his small building at 124 West Cass – minus the thatched “Danish” roof added later – in August 1950. Dr. Karl Smith’s plans for building next door to the east at 122 were announced in April 1950 at the same time as Dr. Ostrander’s. His building housed his and dentist Dr. Earl H. Faber’s offices. Construction of Dr. N. P. Sorensen’s large building across the street at 117 West Cass also began in the spring of 1950. Above first-floor commercial space, the new building housed his suite along with two other offices (*Daily News*, 4/29, 5/13, 6/10, and 8/12/1950).

[Hotels were key features of the commercial life of business districts. Discussions of hotels should focus on buildings still standing, but need to provide some basic historical background on earlier hotel buildings to make clear how the ones now standing relate in their functions and locations to older ones.]

## Hotels

Hotels were an important institution in a growing community such as Greenville. Visitors and other transients, prospective and new residents, and salesmen and other businesspeople constantly arriving in town needed places to stay. The hotels contained dining rooms that served visitors and locals as well. In addition, some of the hotels had meeting rooms or ballrooms that served as gathering places for dances and other entertainments

and meetings. Greenville's first hotel, built by Morton Shearer shortly after his arrival in 1848, was Shearer's Hotel, later known as the Exchange Hotel and then as Keith's Exchange. This three-story wooden Greek Revival building, with its gable-front and side-gable sections, was located on Lafayette's west side in mid-block between Washington and Cass. Destroyed by fire in 1887, it was replaced on the same site with a large brick building known as the Phelps Hotel that, in turn, burned in 1982. Another hotel, the Sanders (later the Central) Hotel, stood on Lafayette's east side on the site of the Rasmussen Building by 1869.

The lone survivor of downtown Greenville's hotels is the Winter Inn. Located at the northeast corner of Lafayette and Montcalm, the hotel stands on the site of older hotels dating back to 1850 that included two successive Rossman House hotels, the especially short-lived Merritt House, built in 1868-69 and burned in 1870 (*Independent*, 9/15/1868, 5/11/1869, 3/15/1870), and the Webster House (renamed the Northern Hotel, presumably for its location on the north side of the business district, in its last days). The Northern suffered a devastating fire in March 1900. Thomas B. Winter had the Winter Inn built on the site in 1901-02 and expanded it with a rear wing – containing “sample rooms” for salesmen and a hall for meetings and dances – in 1902-03. Damaged by fire in the late 1970s, the building was restored to something close to its original appearance and continues in business today.

[Most business districts have some auto-related commercial buildings, sometimes including gas stations as well, dating from the district's period of significance.]

### **Garages/Car Dealerships**

The August 28, 1901, *Independent*, in noticing R. J. Tower's new automobile, stated that it was the first “owned in Greenville.” By the 1910s autos were becoming common sights on Greenville's streets, and substantial service garages and auto dealership buildings, mostly located at the edges of the downtown, were becoming a part of the downtown scene in Greenville as they were across the country. Of the six garage/dealership buildings in the district, Kemp's Garage, 406-08 S. Lafayette, is the oldest, having been built in 1912. The garage did repair work and also housed E. A. Kemp & Son, dealers as of 1913 for Ford, Cadillac, Buick, Studebaker, and Oakland (*Independent*, 4/2/1913). By 1922 the building became Sharpe's Garage, a service/repair garage (advertisement, *Independent*, 11/1/1922). Like most of these buildings that have been so modernized over the years that only the basic roof form and remnants of concrete block side or rear facades remain visible, Kemp's was much renovated in 1961 to become the Greenville Furniture Company's Warehouse Furniture Outlet and nothing original can now be seen from the front (*Daily News*, 5/25/1961).

Most of these buildings were located at the downtown's north and south edges, but Oscar A. Rasmussen, a long-time, highly successful Ford and later Chevrolet dealer, built his building in a highly visible location in the very center of town. Replacing the old Central Hotel in 1917, his broad-fronted Rasmussen Building, 128-32 S. Lafayette, housed his garage, office, and showroom in the ground story's north end until the early 1930s (there was a smaller commercial space at the building's south end).

Rasmussen remained in business as a new and used car dealer longer than anyone else among the early dealers. In the early 1940s his dealership operated out of a garage at 410 S. Lafayette that he may have had built during the 1930s. In 1945 he built a new garage/dealership building at 105-107 S. Lafayette. It housed his O. A. Rasmussen Chevrolet-Cadillac Sales and Service until about 1954 and later was occupied by Bill Berger Chevrolet.

[For many if not most business districts the post World War II era was an important period of developmental activity following the wartime hiatus. This sample discusses the continuity of old businesses within the district down into and through the post-war period, the continuation and expansion of chain businesses in the business district in the early years after the war, and the beginnings of fundamental changes in retailing that affected the business district.]

### **The Post-World War II Years**

The end of the war years brought new prosperity to Greenville. Locally owned businesses continued to form a major component of the downtown business scene. Many of the downtown commercial buildings during the late 1940s, 50s, 60s, and 70s housed long-established Greenville stores or successions of businesses of the same types, such as hardwares or drug stores. The following are buildings within the district that housed a single business or a succession of businesses of the same type for at least fifty years:

- 100 S. Lafayette: Drug stores, beginning with Van Deirse's in 1903, occupied the building until 1970.
- 106-08 S. Lafayette: Grocery stores from 1884 until the early 1940s.
- 124 S. Lafayette: Hardware stores from at least 1908 to c. 1990.
- 218 S. Lafayette: Clothing from before 1900 to the 1990s.
- 226 S. Lafayette: *Greenville Independent* newspaper, 1884 to 1949.
- 300 S. Lafayette: Slawson & Co., Zank's Pharmacy, and other drug stores from completion of building down to 1980s (drug stores at this site almost all the time between 1852 and 1887).
- 328 S. Lafayette: Paint stores from early 1930s to 1990s.
- 400-404 S. Lafayette: Greenville Furniture from 1927 to 1990.
- 117 S. Lafayette: Hardware stores from 1890s to 1974.
- 131 S. Lafayette: Barber shop probably beginning before 1884 to present.
- 201 S. Lafayette: Reno's Bar since 1957.
- 221 S. Lafayette: Drug stores, 1870-1960s.
- 225 S. Lafayette: Drug stores, late 1880s to 1974.
- 301 S. Lafayette: First State Bank, 1914-2002.

The late 1940s saw a building boom in the downtown similar to those experienced in many Michigan towns and elsewhere across the nation as wartime controls on the economy and building materials were lifted and peacetime production resumed. The 1945 Rasmussen Building, 105-07 S. Lafayette, 1947-48 Carter Building, 309-11 S. Lafayette, and the 1948-49 Jimos Brothers Building at 123-25 S. Lafayette were the first post-war commercial buildings constructed. Owned and built by local building contractor Harold Carter, the Carter Building initially had as its primary tenant the Kroger grocery formerly located in a much smaller store at 318 S. Lafayette. Greenville restaurant proprietors Gust and George Jimos had the Jimos Brothers Building built to house Gambles Department Store, which, like Kroger's, was looking for more space.

Most of the downtown's new building seems to have been done at the behest of the non-local chain stores, which began mounting aggressive expansion programs in the late 1940s and 50s. During the early post-war period national chains often continued their early twentieth-century practice of locating new stores along major streets in downtown areas. The building of the new Gambles store in 1949 and the 1954-55 W. T. Grant department store at 322-26 S. Lafayette reflect that pattern. McLellan's and J. C. Penney had been fixtures of the downtown since 1930, located side by side at 310-12 and 314-16 S. Lafayette. In 1950 both companies invested heavily in completely remodeling their stores at these locations, McLellan's expanding following a fire that destroyed their previous quarters at the same location.

In March 1951 a fire in the Carter Building, built only a few years earlier, destroyed the Kroger's grocery. Carter began reconstruction of his building almost immediately, but, rather than reopen with a conventional downtown store at that location, Kroger located a larger site off Lafayette Street at the corner of Grove and Franklin and built a "super-market" with adjacent large parking lot for customers. Offering features that would soon become standard in supermarket planning such as "automatic opening electronic doors," shopping carts with seats for children, a drug counter, and "Speedy Check-Out Stands," the new store opened in January 1953 (*Daily News*, 1/23 and 1/26/1953). (Meijer, the hometown grocery chain, founded in Greenville, smugly took out a full-page advertisement offering "Our Sincere Congratulations" to the Kroger Company "of Cincinnati, Ohio" (*Daily News*, 1/26/1953)).

### **The Commercial District Today**

Even in the early post-World War II period when Kroger's built its new store, much of the new commercial development was taking place around the city's edges, particularly along West Washington. This evolution took place slowly, but new commercial construction in the downtown since the 1960s has been confined to bank buildings – the First Savings & Loan of Saginaw (now Comerica) Bank office at 101 N. Lafayette in

1972 and the Huntington Banks building, a combination of remodeled old building and new construction, at 203-09 S. Lafayette built in 1984. Today's business climate is very different from what it was in the 1970s, when most of the community's leading stores were still located downtown. The downtown today seems to be the home mostly of single-storefront locally owned businesses.

[In addition to historic themes such as Commerce that all historic business districts reflect, some districts will also have buildings that illustrate distinctive, locally important historic themes – for Greenville its Danish ethnic heritage that is reflected in a number of the downtown buildings.]

### **Ethnic Heritage – Danish**

During the 1970s downtown Greenville buildings began to sprout stucco and half-timber “Danish” affectations made of cheap materials. What was done to these buildings in the name of Danishness should be an embarrassment to all true Danes and all who value the Danish heritage. Downtown Greenville wears its true Danish heritage in the many buildings that were built by members of the Danish community or that housed businesses owned by them and in the Danish Brotherhood Hall that stands a block off Lafayette Street within the district.

Downtown Greenville's first businessman of Danish heritage may have been Lars Hansen, who in partnership with D. S. Moore ran Hansen & Co., a dry-goods, groceries, and provisions store, in 1867. Late in 1867 Moore took over the business when Hansen went back to Denmark. He returned in May 1868 with a large party of immigrants and soon resumed running the store (*Independent*, 12/3/1867, 5/12 and 6/2/1868). A few months later Hansen sold a half-interest in the business to N. E. Stoughton, and it became Hansen & Stoughton. The store was located in a no longer standing building owned by Hansen along with Myron Ryder. An 1870 “Sketch of Greenville” by C. C. Ellsworth then listed the store as one of the leading dry-goods shops out of the ten or twelve in Greenville and termed Hansen a “young man, but a few years from Denmark” (*Independent*, 4/5/1870). The still standing Partlow Block, 210 S. Lafayette, housed Lars Hansen's grocery and flour and feed store when it was completed in late 1874. The newspaper referred to the business as Hansen & Partlow, “family groceries,” a few months later (*Independent*, 11/4/1874, 2/4/1875).

Two large landmark commercial buildings built by members of the Danish community in downtown Greenville are the Hansen and Rasmussen Buildings that face one another across Lafayette Street. Both were built in 1917. The Hansen Block, 131-35 S. Lafayette, was built for Dr. John R. Hansen, whose residence and doctor's office was upstairs. Dr. Hansen reportedly officiated at the births of a great many Greenville babies over several decades. The building contained income-producing commercial space downstairs.

The Rasmussen Block, 128-32 S. Lafayette, was the property of Oscar A. Rasmussen. A newcomer to Greenville itself when the building went up, O. A. Rasmussen had the strongest of connections to the area's Danish settlement, being one of six sons of August Rasmussen, who, one of the founders of the settlement, arrived in 1856. Reportedly a “natural salesman” with a knack for closing the deal, Rasmussen was highly successful both in real estate and as a new and used automobile dealer (Flat River Historical Society, p. 123). His new building in downtown Greenville housed his Ford agency and showroom and garage as well as a furniture and undertaking establishment that leased the first floor's south end. Rasmussen initially sold Ford products but switched to Dodge and Oakland and then to Buick by 1926. This building housed his business until the early 1930s.

Three other buildings in downtown Greenville are also associated with Oscar Rasmussen. By 1940 Rasmussen was a Chevrolet dealer, and the garage building at 410 S. Lafayette housed his dealership during the early 1940s. He built the building at 105-107 S. Lafayette in 1945 to replace it. His Oscar A Rasmussen Chevrolet-Cadillac Sales remained in business there until about 1954. Rasmussen had previously built the building next door to the north at 101-103 S. Lafayette in 1937 as income property. In part it initially housed the A & P supermarket.

Another long-term Greenville “Danish” commercial institution was Christiansen's Reliable Hardware at 124-26 S. Lafayette. The hardware store was established as the W. J. Fowler & Co. Hardware around 1900 in no.

124 and expanded into 126 by 1932. Harry and Anna Christiansen purchased the business in 1939 and ran it until 1984 (Flat River Historical Society, pp. 52-53; Elsie McNeil notes).

Other buildings in the district that housed businesses owned by members of the Danish community for significant periods of time include:

- 104 S. Lafayette: H. Peter Hansen's Copenhagen or Hansen's Grocery, 1910s to 1930s.
- 106 S. Lafayette: D. P. Madsen and H. J. Rasmussen groceries, early 1900s and later 1920s.
- 116 S. Lafayette: Frank Hansen restaurant, 1940s; Hansen's Music House, late 1940s to present.
- 111 S. Lafayette: H. C. Hansen barber shop, 1910s to c. 1936.
- 115 S. Lafayette: Clifford Carlsen's Carlsen's Wallpaper & Paint, early 1940s to c. 1966.
- 129 S. Lafayette: Senius Neilsen, tailor and cleaners (and residence), early 1920s to later 1940s.

Greenville Lodge No. 70 of the Danish Brotherhood (Det Dansk Brodersomfund) was established in 1893. Founded in 1882, the Danish Brotherhood in America had as its goal the unification of all Danes in America to perpetuate the memory of the homeland. Like similar organizations representing other nationalities, the Brotherhood also provided a program of insurance against death, sickness, and disability administered through its lodges. By 1889 the Brotherhood comprised thirty-four lodges, and by 1907 there were 255 lodges with 17,173 members. A Danish Sisterhood in America, which Nielsen describes as largely an auxiliary, was founded in 1893 (Nielsen, 173-75).

Greenville's Danish Brotherhood lodge held dances – they seemed to specialize in masquerade dances – often at the Coliseum, located where the present Danish Brotherhood Hall is located. The building was owned by the local Grange after 1908, but in 1917, when the Grange built a new building, the Danish Brotherhood bought it (10/25/1916, 2/14/1917).

The Danish Brotherhood held their meetings there, but also continued to rent the building out for entertainments, most often dances. One special occasion was a showing of two “moving pictures,” “A Trip to Denmark and Schleswig” and “A Nation in Celebration,” to celebrate the reunion of south Schleswig – taken from Denmark by the Prussians in 1864 – with Denmark the previous year (the 1921 calendar of the national Danish Brotherhood featured “1864-1920, Denmark and Slesvig Reunited,” illustrated with a photograph showing King Christian X crossing the border between Denmark and Schleswig July 10, 1920). The Coliseum burned down in the late 1920s and the Danish Brotherhood replaced it on the same site with the present hall in 1930 (*Daily News*, 7/9/1930). The building, as it has been since its construction, is used by both the Danish Brotherhood and Danish Sisterhood.

Since 1965 the city of Greenville has hosted an annual Danish Festival. Perhaps because of its growing awareness of the historical importance of the area's Danish community, the city soon began to encourage businesses to build and modernize using a “Danish” theme. The result was an infestation during the 1970s of renovations in mostly cheap materials that cheat residents and visitors alike of the full experience of Greenville's outstanding downtown architecture with its Danish historical associations.

In resounding contrast to the visual poverty of most of the “Danish” renovations is the c. 1990 transformation of two small and very ordinary 1950 medical office buildings into a visually stunning expression of Danishness. When Dr. Kirkwood Faber, D.D.S., after long years' service on the Danish Festival Committee, decided to renovate his combined building, he felt constrained to follow the Danish theme. Instead of the usual stucco-and-half-timber-look plywood storefront job, however, Dr. Kirkwood redesigned his building with roofs modeled after what he saw in picture books, a red tile roof over one part modeled after the ubiquitous red tile roofs of Copenhagen and other large and small Danish towns and the thatched roofs still evident in the countryside. His extraordinary building stands on a busy side street directly across the street from the post office. One such building may be enough for Greenville, but Dr. Faber's is a worthy homage to the city's and region's Danish heritage.

[An important part of a business district's historic significance is the social and entertainment-recreation activity its buildings housed during the period of significance. The sample discusses

the many meeting halls various buildings contained in their upper stories and their uses by fraternal and social organizations and for social, musical, and other events – focusing on the still-standing buildings that housed these organizations and activities. It also discusses the local movie theater history enough to place the surviving local representations of that history in context.]

### **Social History/Entertainment and Recreation**

The pages of the *Greenville Independent* make it clear that Greenville's brick blocks contained numerous meeting halls in their upper stories and that these spaces housed a surprisingly rich variety of social, cultural, entertainment, and other activities and events throughout the later nineteenth and early twentieth-century years. Most of the three-story blocks had meeting halls in their third stories and a few of the two-story ones, as well, had upstairs halls. Building owners included these halls in their buildings as income-producing investments.

Some of the halls were rented out to fraternal or other organizations and became the exclusive meeting places of those organizations for the duration of their leases. Fraternal and social organizations formed an important component of the community's early social life. Greenville's earliest fraternal organization was its Masonic lodge, organized in 1857. The Odd Fellows (IOOF) established a lodge in 1865, the Knights of Pythias (K of P) about 1873, the Grange in 1874, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) by the early 1880s, and the Danish Brotherhood in 1893.

Other halls were built with the expectation of using them for events. In the latter case the building owner or a lessee would hold events that would generate revenue from the admissions. Eureka Hall, in the third floor of the now-demolished Eureka Block, for example, was a leading event venue in the first years after its completion in early July 1873. Among the many events held there was Civil War general Judson Kilpatrick's program on "Sherman's March to the Sea" in March 1874; a performance of the Peak Family, "vocalists, harpists, and Swiss bell ringers," a few weeks later; a Free Love lecture by Victoria Woodhull in February 1875; and a band concert in May 1879 (*Independent*, 6/11/1873, 3/18 and 4/1/1874, 2/18/1875, and 5/1/1879). The Eureka Block's public hall seems to have had a longer life as a place for events and entertainment than most of these halls, serving as the community's leading events place until the opening of the Phelps Opera House on West Cass in the mid-1880s superseded it. Others, as public event and meeting places, seem to have had remarkably short lives before being converted to other uses or becoming lodge halls.

The district's brick blocks contained at least the following meeting halls:

- Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Fargo & Belknap Block, 332 S. Lafayette. Served as Masonic temple from early 1870 probably until 1890 (*Independent*, 1/11/1870, 5/1/1890).
- Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Shearer Block, probably 204 S. Lafayette. Used as Knights of Pythias lodge hall c. 1873-75 before moving to the Potter Block (*Independent*, 4/1/1875).
- Rider's Hall (soon renamed Potter's Hall), 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Rider & Potter Block, 301 S. Lafayette. Described as having dimensions of 100 x 33 feet, with a 17 foot ceiling, and with a platform and 500 seats available. Frederick Douglas spoke there in January 1872, and various "hops" are noted. Soon superseded by Eureka Hall, it served as the Knights of Pythias hall from 1875 to 1890 and then became the Masonic temple (*Independent*, 8/2/1871, 1/3/1872, 12/31/1873, 12/9/1874, 4/1/1875, 2/6 and 5/1/1890).
- Grange Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Rutan Block's south half, 404 S. Lafayette. The Montcalm and Eureka Grange occupied this hall upon the building's completion in 1874. By 1884 they had moved to 330 (*Independent*, 5/6/1874).
- Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Partlow Block, 210 S. Lafayette. This hall was being used for services by the Christian Church shortly after the building's 1874 completion (*Independent*, 12/9/1874). The 1884 Sanborn lists the hall as vacant.
- Norton Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Norton & Ecker Block, 225-27 S. Lafayette. Rented by the Good Templars upon the building's completion early in 1875 (*Independent*, 3/18/1875).
- Grange Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Fargo & Belknap Block, 330 S. Lafayette. The 1884 Sanborn indicates the third floor at 330 was being used as the Grange Hall, with the third floor of 332 serving as the Masonic temple.

- GAR Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Fargo & Belknap Block, 330-32 S. Lafayette. The GAR and WRC occupied rooms in the building's 2<sup>nd</sup> story, with a lodge hall across the front, beginning in 1890 (*Independent*, 2/6, 2/27, and 3/6/1890).

The local Grange seems to have been the first Greenville lodge to own its hall. In 1908 they bought a building, located where the Danish Brotherhood Hall is now, and made it into the Coliseum, a meeting place also used for dances and other entertainments. In 1916-17 the Grange built a new hall building that still stands at 117 E. Montcalm. The Coliseum then became the first hall owned by the Danish Brotherhood.

The Knights of Pythias also looked toward moving out of rented quarters into a building of their own during the 1910s. In 1913 the *Independent* reported apparently firmed-up plans for a new building, with the temple on the third floor and stores and offices beneath. The site seems to have been then vacant ground between 117 and 127 S. Lafayette. Funds were to be raised through the sale of stock, with much of the money supposedly in-hand. Despite this rosy report, this plan came to naught (*Independent*, 6/11/1913). In 1927 the Knights were able to purchase the Walker & Clough Block, 102-04 S. Lafayette, and converted the building's second and third stories into their lodge quarters.

The Masons established their lodge hall in the upstairs of the Callaghan (Church/Callaghan & Miller) Block, 113-15 S. Lafayette, during the middle or late 1910s. In 1920, during a period of rapid growth, the Masons bought the building (*Independent*, 12/8/1920). It still serves as their meeting place.

In addition to the halls in the various commercial blocks, several of Greenville's downtown hotels also offered ballrooms that saw use for dances, dinners, parties, and other events. The one surviving historic hotel, the 1901-02 Winter Inn, had a hall in its rear wing, added in 1902-03. It opened with a dance February 20, 1903 (*Independent*, 9/17/1902, 2/18/1903).

The leading venue for events in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Greenville was Phelps Opera House, located on the south side of West Cass Street just west of the Potter Block. Established by T. I. Phelps, whose livery stable had previously occupied the same site, the large frame building opened in the mid-1880s and hosted serious and comic musical and dramatic performances and other events into the 1910s.

Roller skating was another popular form of entertainment – if not a craze – across the nation in the 1880s. In Greenville the Princess Skating Rink was built during the period between 1884 and 1887 at the northeast corner of Montcalm and Franklin. Newspaper advertisements for events suggest that it was designed to function both as a skating rink and as a performance space. The same building seems to have gone through a rapid evolution in the coming years, serving both as a recreational place and for other purposes. The 1892 Sanborn map shows it as a “fruit evaporator (closed)” while in late 1894 a new lessee, Percy D. Edsall, made it into the “Academy of Music” (*Independent*, 10/24/1894). The 1900 Sanborn map shows it as housing the Greenville Planter Company, but in 1908 the local Grange bought it to use for their meetings and for events. The name it acquired, the Coliseum, stuck with it when the Danish Brotherhood bought the building from the Grange in 1917 when they built their new Grange Hall on East Montcalm Street (*Independent*, 2/14/1917). During the Grange and Danish Brotherhood eras the building saw continued recreational use, for dances, roller skating (including masquerade skating parties), and other events until the large building burned in 1928. They built the present Danish Brotherhood Hall on the site in 1930.

A new form of entertainment, motion pictures, came on the scene at the beginning of the twentieth century. Greenville's first “vaudettes,” small movie theaters, appeared about 1907. The Marguerite (soon renamed the Lyric) was in operation in the Potter Block in 1907, and another, the Ideal, in the Slawson Block by the next year (*Independent*, 5/1/1907; 2/12 and 3/4/1908). The old Phelps Opera House also became a movie house, the Silver Family Theatre, by 1916. In 1920 and again probably in the late 1930s the old building with its iron-sheathed wood exterior was modernized (*Independent*, 3/3 and 5/19/1920). By the 1940s it was encased in a concrete block Art Deco facade. While the Silver Theater has been demolished, the Potter and Slawson Blocks that contained Greenville's first movie theaters still stand.

In addition to musical and theatrical shows that were an ongoing feature of the cultural/entertainment life of towns like Greenville that were located along railroad lines and were large enough to drum up a paying

audience, exhibits of curiosities hawked from town to town sometimes found their way to Greenville's main street. One such was the "Cardiff Giant," a reputed petrified human of larger-than-life dimensions "found" buried on a farm near Cardiff, New York, in 1869. Although the true facts regarding its surreptitious carving and burial emerged before 1869 was over, the figure went on tour for years afterwards. A famous hoax, it survives and is now on permanent display at the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, New York. Previously on display in Ionia and Grand Rapids, the Cardiff Giant was brought to Greenville in mid-December 1875. "The Cardiff Giant is on exhibition in the Brothers building, and many people visit it daily, finding it a curiosity well worthy of their attention. School children will be admitted on Saturday for 5 cents each" (*Independent*, 12/9 and 12/16/1875). Presumably the figure was displayed in a vacant storefront on the ground floor of the building, located at 306-08 S. Lafayette.

## **Churches**

The outer edges of the business district became the sites of most of Greenville's churches in the nineteenth century. By the 1870s and 80s central Greenville contained Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, Adventist, and Catholic churches. Greenville's churches tended to locate one block off Lafayette to either side, and the city's three oldest church buildings stand within the district.

The oldest standing church building was constructed in 1855-56 by the Congregationalists and originally stood on the site of the present First Congregational Church building at the northwest corner of Cass and Clay streets one block east of Lafayette. Early in 1874, when the Congregationalists were planning a new church, they sold this building to the Episcopalians, who occupied it as their church from February until August. Whatever the reasons – the suddenly harsh economic times probably played a role – the Congregationalists had to drop their building plans, and the Episcopalians turned the building back to them. In 1879, when the Congregationalists were finally able to build, they moved their old church – the present St. Paul's – across the street to the current site. When the present 1879-80 Congregational church was built, the older building became St. Paul's Episcopal Church a second time. With renovations to give it a more "churchly" interior, it remains in use today.

Another standing church building located two blocks west, at W. Cass and Franklin's northeast corner, also once served as St. Paul's. Following the August 1874 abandonment of the former Congregational church building, the Episcopalians raised funds and, in the fall of 1874, built this small and simple chapel, opened probably in January 1875. Like the former Congregational church, this building also served only a short time as an Episcopal church. The building was sold and the parish for a time became dormant. From around 1880 until the late 1980s the building served as the Seventh Day Adventist church.

[Architecture will be a key historic theme for most historic business districts, and the architectural significance has to be defined separate from any discussion of the buildings' importance under Commerce or other themes for the nomination to be able to justify checking national register Criterion C. The sample begins with its own short summary paragraph that informs the reader what the section is going to discuss. It begins with the churches and post office to both give them their due and also to clear the decks for discussing the commercial buildings: while the churches and post office are important in architectural terms, they are not the main story – the commercial buildings are! The Architecture theme should be a narrative that builds a case for architectural significance by discussing the buildings in groups for the most part chronologically and based on styles. It should discuss individual buildings to the degree necessary to explain significance in terms of the broader architectural patterns of the district.]

## **Architecture**

The Greenville Downtown Historic District is notable in architectural terms for its commercial buildings, churches, the post office building, and one house. The district contains commercial buildings that, dating from

1869 to the 1950s and early 1960s, exhibit a stylishness and diversity in design and materials that seem unusual for what was still a small city.

Greenville's three surviving nineteenth-century church buildings all stand within the district. The present First Congregational Church is a highly polished and intact auditorium church in the Gothic Revival designed by an important Michigan architect, Elijah E. Myers, who planned five state capitols, numerous Midwestern county courthouses, and fine churches and other buildings in Michigan. The former Congregational church building, serving as St. Paul's Episcopal Church for all but about twenty-five years of its 150 years, dates back to Greenville's pioneer years. Combining vestigial Greek Revival features, such as the square belfry and square piers supporting the tower, with pointed-arch windows and a steeply sloping roof suggestive of the Gothic Revival, it reflects a pragmatic, non-doctrinaire approach to church design that, characteristic of the times for non-liturgical Protestant churches, adopted Gothic as a "Christian" style but within a budget. The 1874 Episcopal/Adventist church was originally similar to the present St. Paul's, but without the tower and belfry. It is clad in synthetic siding and the Gothic side windows now have square heads. Something better should be done.

The Greenville Post Office building, constructed in 1938-39, is a fine example of the solid and substantial post office buildings the government was building in great numbers across the nation during the 1930s. The building follows one of a number of standard designs the post office was using at the time for new buildings in smaller cities such as Greenville. Its reserved exterior exemplifies a simplified Art Deco-influenced classicism that in relation to post offices of this period has been called "Starved-Classicism," in which ornament is eliminated or reduced to a minimum to reduce costs and speed construction. Notwithstanding the less than flattering term, Greenville's building, like most others of its type, is an ornament to its street.

Greenville's commercial architecture exemplifies a broad variety of architectural styles and features characteristic of the later nineteenth and early and mid-twentieth centuries in Michigan's small-city commercial districts. The downtown's oldest buildings are brick Italianate blocks built in the 1869-75 period.

Italianate as an architectural style for commercial buildings harkens back to the city palazzos of Renaissance Italy built in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries with their connotations of power, security, and prosperity. Tastemakers in Britain and the Continent began to see Italianate as an alternative to the prevalent architectural vocabularies of Roman and Greek classicism and the Gothic Revival and as a particularly appropriate style for certain types of buildings, including banks and commercial buildings that represented capital and sought to look solid and substantial. The first of these Italianate commercial buildings began to appear in the United States in the 1840s.

Greenville's Italianate commercial buildings, broadly speaking, are similar to Italianate commercial buildings throughout southern Michigan and beyond. They are narrow-fronted along Lafayette, usually a single storefront – generally twenty to twenty-four feet – in width, although there are a number of double-storefront buildings, and deep. They have load-bearing brick exterior walls and timber structural systems, although there may be some use of iron interior support columns.

The exteriors display typically Italianate decorative features such as bracketed cornices, corbelled brickwork detailing below the frieze, and round-arch, segmental-arch, and rounded-corner windows with boldly projecting caps. By the time Greenville's Italianate commercial buildings were being built in the 1869-75 period, iron was becoming an increasingly popular material for cornices in place of wood, presumably because of fire concerns, and almost all of the downtown Greenville Italianate buildings' cornices appear to be of that material. The upper facades' decorative window caps are also of fire-resistant materials, brick, iron, and, less commonly, cut stone. Many if not most of these buildings had iron storefront columns supporting the upper facades, but of them all only the ones in 400-404 S. Lafayette have survived successive modernizations.

The Greenville district contains fifteen Italianate commercial buildings, six of them double storefronts and one a triple-storefront building. They are:

102-04 S. Lafayette. Walker & Clough Block, 1873

106-08 S. Lafayette. Edwards Block, 1875

124 S. Lafayette. Rich Block, 1870  
 200-02 S. Lafayette. Shearer Block, 1869-70  
 204 S. Lafayette. Shearer Block, 1870-71  
 210 S. Lafayette. Partlow Block, 1874  
 304 S. Lafayette. Stevens Block, 1873  
 306-08 S. Lafayette. Brothers Block, 1869-70  
 328-32 S. Lafayette. Post Office Block, 1869, 1871-72  
 400-04 S. Lafayette. Rutan Block, 1873-74  
 213 S. Lafayette. Pre-1884  
 215-17 S. Lafayette. Cole & Bennett/Briggs & Gibbs Block, 1872-73  
 223 S. Lafayette. Lawton Block, 1873  
 225-27 S. Lafayette. Norton & Ecker Block, 1874  
 301 S. Lafayette. Rider & Potter Block, 1870

These buildings possess a collective importance in illustrating Italianate commercial architecture, in all its broad variety of materials and decorative features, in one west Michigan town. Six of the buildings retain original cornices (some buildings had brickwork detailing along the roofline and no wood or iron cornices), with only two of the surviving cornices alike. The Rider & Potter Block, one of the first of the brick Italianate blocks to be built, is the only one having a wooden cornice. It displays large paired brackets, detailed with sawn appliqué on the sides of the brackets, and smaller modillion-like brackets between the widely separated pairs and below the broadly overhanging eaves. The same variety is present in the buildings' window cap designs. Several buildings have brick caps in rows that conform to the arch of the window heads. In the Post Office Block, Rider & Potter Block, and a few other buildings, the caps are formed of two or three rows of slightly raised headers placed upright within the rows, with "triangles" or rectangles of corbelled brick forming the impost on either side of the window from which the arched cap springs.

The 1884 Grabill and 1886 Gault Block at 226 and 126 S. Lafayette form parts of the next, Late Victorian generation of commercial blocks in downtown Greenville dating from the 1880s to the very early 1900s. By the mid-1880s Italianate was passing out of favor in the face of other more recent design influences across the nation, and, while decorative iron cornices and window caps were still commonly used, new buildings were less likely to display specifically Italianate features. In these newer buildings the boldly projecting, elaborately decorative cornices tended to be much reduced in depth and, often, simplified in detail, often with fewer brackets and those more widely spaced. The windows tended to be square-headed in form rather than round or segmental-arch-headed. The Gault Block façade harkens back to Italianate in its segmental-arch windows and bracketed cornice but the façade playfully turns the tables aesthetically with a rock-face rather than "finished" facade treatment and smooth-slab window caps rather than the typical boldly projecting ones found in Italianate buildings. The Grabill Block's front window caps and the Gault Block's modillion-like cornice brackets display incised detailing of plant forms that seem to be derived from English Aesthetic Movement sources such as Christopher Dresser designs.

The Grabill Block's owner, Elliott C. Grabill, retained Ionia contractors Allen & Van Tassel to build his new building (*Independent*, 5/22/1884). Van Tassel was previously associated with G. W. Badger in another Ionia building firm, Badger & Van Tassel. The March 9, 1882, *Ionia Sentinel* reported that Badger "has completed the drawings of a handsome new front" for the building at 340 W. Main in Ionia. Badger & Van Tassel soon received the contract for renovation of the building, which included the new front (*Sentinel*, 3/23/1882).

Allen was Claire Allen, practicing as an architect in Jackson by about 1890 and later a leading figure in the profession in southern Michigan. Allen & Van Tassel were the contractors for the Ionia County Courthouse in Ionia, built in 1883-85, and for the Lenawee County Courthouse, begun in April 1884 (the firm withdrew from this project in October 1884, reportedly leaving \$7000 in unpaid debts – *Adrian Times & Expositor*, 10/21/1884, 9/30/1885). Could Allen & Van Tassel have designed Grabill's building? Unfortunately little research (beyond that on 340 W. Main) has been done on building activities at the time in Ionia's business district, where Allen & Van Tassel might have done substantial work, and nothing else is known about their careers prior to 1883.

The Harris Block, 222 S. Lafayette, exemplifies another architectural mode of the 1880s sometimes called “Panel Brick.” This is characterized by the extensive use of raised and corbelled brickwork and panels of decorative brickwork such as the sawtooth brickwork between the second and third-story windows. With its intricate brickwork, highly sculptural pedestals crowning the projecting upper ends of the piers, paneled frieze, and rock-face stone window trim, the Harris is a particularly fine example of the Panel Brick mode. The Callaghan Building, 113-15 S. Lafayette, displays some of the same Panel Brick features.

From the later 1880s into the very early twentieth century buildings often reflected the influence of what came to be called Richardsonian Romanesque. This was a stylistic vocabulary inspired by the work of architect H. H. Richardson during the 1870s and early 80s. Richardson’s trademark massive masonry buildings inspired a generation of American buildings displaying large, broad, round-arch “Romanesque” windows, rock-face stonework, and decorative work such as clusters of diminutive Romanesque colonettes and pine cone finials atop piers and the ends of cornices. No. 224 S. Lafayette, with its triple round-arch windows, gabled treatment, tall colonettes, finials, and “checkerboard” parapet – the district’s foremost example – is a remarkable architectural achievement for a single-storefront wide façade in a town the size of Greenville. The Winter Inn and no. 305 S. Lafayette also both show the influence of Richardsonian Romanesque in the rock-face stone beltcourses that form such visually important components of their facades.

Perhaps the most innovative Late Victorian facades along Greenville’s main street are those of the 1887 Slawson Block and 1890 E. B. Edwards Block, 300-302 and 216 S. Lafayette, respectively. These buildings’ upper facades display wonderfully intricate detailing in beltcourses at window sill, meeting rail, and head level; the window caps (and arches over the Slawson’s middle windows above the two storefronts); and in the piers that frame the facades. What is especially noteworthy about these upper facades is that they are faced in what was called at the time “artificial stone” – *i.e.* concrete block. Concrete block as a building material was beginning to come into greater use for ornamental details such as window caps by the 1880s, but its use for entire facades at this early date was all but unknown.

The Slawson Block was the first of a number of downtown Greenville buildings constructed during 1887 that used artificial stone in their facades. Its upper façade on the Lafayette side was faced in it, and the artificial stone treatment extended a short distance around the corner facing East Cass, the rest of the Cass façade being finished in locally made brick. In addition to the Slawson Block, the row of new buildings at 210-224 S. Lafayette built in the wake of the March 31, 1887, fire was also faced in artificial stone, and the brick façade of the Phelps Hotel, replacing another building burned at the same time, also used artificial stone trim pieces. The *Independent* on June 9, 1887, reported that, “Mr. Stevens of Lansing will move his plant here for the manufacture of the sills, belts, caps, flints [plinths?], coping and front pieces for the new hotel.” A month later, the July 14 edition noted that, “The artificial stone in Phelps’ new hotel and in the wall of Geo. Slawson’s new building are made in Greenville” – presumably by Stevens.

The row or block of stores at 210-24 S. Lafayette was by far Greenville’s largest artificial stone project. Although separately owned, the buildings were given a uniform façade. The newspaper reported that excavation for the new block began about the beginning of June and that a contract to build the stores was let to H. G. Wright & Co. early in July (*Independent*, 6/2 and 7/7/1887). In the completed block, each building’s facade was capped by a low metal pent roof and had a slightly projecting center section capped by a finial-topped metal gable treatment. The third store from the north, Jacobson & Netzorg’s double store, displayed a broader projecting center section with taller gable than the rest, two buildings to the north and four to the south. This block with its picturesque gabled roofline must have been a prominent landmark in the business district. The two buildings at the south end of the row have been demolished and replaced with a lower building and the rest of the row was refaced c. 1960-61, so that all that remains visible today are the vermiculated piers at ground level flanking the second-story entry between 312 and 314.

The 210-224 facades are gone except for the one detail, but the single-storefront building at 216 S. Lafayette, built in 1890, is virtually identical in overall design and detailing to the row’s single-storefront buildings. It and the Slawson Block are highly important architectural landmarks both for their Late Victorian design and their construction with “artificial stone” facades at this early date.

No. 129 S. Lafayette, built probably c.1907, is one of the most fanciful of these Late Victorian blocks. Unlike the more typical turn-of-the-century commercial buildings that present simplified classical detailing to the street, this is light-heartedly Gothic, with a pointed arch of bi-chromatic stonework – whitish limestone voussoirs alternating with brown sandstone ones – over the storefront entry and stylized Tudor hoods atop the square-head second-story windows. Corbelled brickwork in the frieze and bracketed metal storefront and façade cornices, the latter with pine-cone finials at the ends, add to the decorative interest.

One of downtown Greenville’s largest early twentieth-century buildings, the broad-fronted Hansen Building at 135 S. Lafayette, and a few smaller ones, including the single-storefront building at 122 S. Lafayette, are fine examples of a characteristic architectural “style” of the early twentieth-century in Michigan’s downtowns known as “Commercial Brick.” Commercial Brick seems to be an outgrowth of the Arts-and-Crafts movement. It is an architecture in which the patterns formed by the brickwork provide the styling, with few or no references to historic architectural styles such as Georgian, Neoclassical, or Gothic. Horizontal bands or rectangular panels formed by bricks placed on edge and bands of bricks on edge outlining window areas – all of these often accented with blocks of stone, terra cotta, or concrete placed at the corners or other prominent locations – are fundamental features. The Hansen Building’s façade is typically Commercial Brick in its banks of upright stretcher bricks punctuated by decorative blocks, and displays a modicum of historicism in the classical swag-decorated plaque below its stepped parapet.

Built at the same time as the Hansen Block, the 1917 Rasmussen Building, 128-32 S. Lafayette, contrasts strongly with that building in its no-nonsense lack of detailing. It seems a precursor to the district’s post World War II commercial architecture in the austere simplicity of its broad paving brick front with its large windows forming an almost continuous band across the facade. This building is one of the prime landmarks of Greenville’s Danish heritage, but the plaque that bore the Rasmussen name has been replaced or covered over. The building’s appearance would be much improved by restoring both the Rasmussen name plaque and the building’s cornice.

The district contains nine commercial buildings dating from the early post World War II era from 1945 to the early 1960s, and many additional older buildings were also renovated with new storefronts then. In addition, the rebuilding of the upper facades of the row of buildings at 310-20 S. Lafayette, dramatically changing those buildings’ appearance from elaborately detailed Late Victorian to a single broad, streamlined façade similar to that seen at suburban malls, also took place in this time period, c. 1960-61. Thus these years appear to represent an important era in the downtown’s development.

Five of the nine buildings built in the 1945-62 period have subsequently had their facades so significantly renovated that they no longer can be viewed as contributing to the district’s historic character, and some of the buildings modernized during those years have also been renovated again since then leaving little or nothing behind of the 1945-62 work. The most visually interesting and best preserved commercial buildings of the period in downtown Greenville are the 1948-49 Jimos Bros. Building, 123-25 S. Lafayette, with its orange brick upper façade that pays only understated deference to modernism, and the 1950 Sorenson Building, 117 W. Cass, a straightforward two-story example of the International Style with bare white cinder block walls and black and white structural glass tile accents in the first-floor storefront.

## **TEXTNOTES/FOOTNOTES/ENDNOTES**

The Significance statement will likely require citing information sources. Textnotes (in parentheses at the end of a sentence or paragraph), footnotes at the bottom of each page, or endnotes at the end of the section are all acceptable formats if used consistently throughout.

When to use notes to cite sources:

- Direct quotes – these always require notes.

- General historical background on the community that comes from widely available published sources such as local and county histories – a note is generally not necessary since such sources of information will be cited in the general bibliography.
- General historical background that comes from a source not readily available such as a manuscript local history only available in a local repository – a note is appropriate.
- Historical information on specific buildings or other features of the district included in the Significance statement – notes are essential, except for information from general sources such as old maps and city directories that were used to provide information for all buildings.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography lists the sources used in preparing the nomination. Bibliographic entries must be:

- Complete – including the name(s) of authors, the full title of the source (including the part following the colon!), volume number, and publication information, including publisher’s name, place of publication, and date.
- In a consistent standard format such as the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

For newspapers, cite the articles/tidbits relating to specific buildings in the inventory entries (see the sample inventory entries) – these need not appear in the general bibliography as well. The general bibliography should cite all the articles used in preparing the nomination’s significance statement. Where the subject matter is not made clear by the headline, it is appropriate to add a brief explanation (see the third to fifth items). Listing a newspaper with only a broad date range (*Iron Mountain News*, 1930-65) is **Not Acceptable!**

Sample:

*Iron Mountain News*, Iron Mountain, MI

1/12/1933: “County Relief Problem Reaches Severe Stage.”

5/14/1948: “Widening of New Highway in Progress.”

6/7/1948: “Building a New Town,” editorial.

1/28/1949: “Well-Known Architect Died in Menominee,” about Derrick Hubert.

8/16/1949: “City to Join in Protest to Railroad,” proposed passenger service abandonment.

7/1/1950: “County Lost 11 Per Cent of Population in Last Ten Years.”

For a photographic collection, list who has it or where housed.

For one-of-a-kind materials, always list the location where found.

## BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The national register requires a written description of the district boundaries. The boundary description must carefully and fully define the boundaries of the nominated area. Descriptions may reference tax parcel numbers or properties identified by street addresses. The sample language below uses abbreviations typically seen in tax assessor records: cr for corner, pt for point, sd for said, and th for thence.

Sample:

For the Niles Downtown Historic District:

Beginning at center pt of intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Main Sts; th S in center of 2<sup>nd</sup> to pt in line with S line of 111 N 2<sup>nd</sup>; th E along S line of sd 111 N 2<sup>nd</sup> to W line of 209 E Cedar; th S on W line of sd 209 E Cedar to center of E Cedar St; th E in center line of Cedar to center of N 3<sup>rd</sup> St; th N in center of sd N 3<sup>rd</sup> to pt in line with S line of 109 N 3<sup>rd</sup>; th E along S line and N along E line of sd 109 N 3<sup>rd</sup> to center of alley; th E in center line of alley behind (S of) 322 E Main to center of N 4<sup>th</sup> St; th S in center line of S 4<sup>th</sup> to pt in line with S line of 103-105 N 4<sup>th</sup>/403 E Cedar; th E along sd S line to SE cr of sd 103-105 N 4<sup>th</sup>/40s E. Cedar; th N along sd E line and E line of 111 N 4<sup>th</sup> to center of alley S of Four Flags Hotel property; th E along center line of sd alley to center of N 5<sup>th</sup>; th N along center line of N 5<sup>th</sup> to center line of E Main St; th W along center line of E Main to center of N 4<sup>th</sup>; th N along center line of N 4<sup>th</sup> to S line of 217-29 N 4<sup>th</sup>/214 N 5<sup>th</sup>; th E along S line of 217-29 N 4<sup>th</sup>/214 N 5<sup>th</sup> to center of N 5<sup>th</sup> St; th N along center line of N 5<sup>th</sup> to center of Sycamore St; th W along center line of Sycamore to pt in line with E line of 305 N 3<sup>rd</sup>; th N and W along E and N lines of 305 N 3<sup>rd</sup> to center of N 3<sup>rd</sup> St; th S along center line of N 3<sup>rd</sup> to center of alley between Main and Sycamore Sts; th W along center line of alley W to center of N 2<sup>nd</sup>; th N along center line of N 2<sup>nd</sup> to center of Sycamore St; th W along center line of Sycamore W to E line of 35 Sycamore; th N, W and S along E, N and W lines of 35 Sycamore and in same S'y direction across Sycamore and along W line of 34 Sycamore to SW cr of 34 Sycamore property; th E along S line of 34 Sycamore and 220-222 Front to center of Front St; th S along center of Front to center of E Main St; th E along center line of E Main; th E along center line of E Main to center of N 2<sup>nd</sup> St, the POB.

## **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATIONS**

The boundaries selected for national register districts must be appropriate in terms of the national register criteria. SHPO staff will work with your community at the outset of the project to ensure that the boundaries selected for the district meet national register standards. The nomination must contain a clear-cut written justification for the precise boundaries selected that explains why adjoining areas were not included. Below is a sample boundary justification for a business district:

### **Niles Downtown Historic District**

Boundaries have been drawn to include the contiguous historic core of the downtown while omitting parking lots, vacant land where buildings once stood, and areas containing modern buildings that surround the historic core area. To the district's immediate north along and north of Sycamore Street are several city parking lots, vacant land north of Sycamore to the west of N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and a much remodeled 1940s building north of Sycamore between N. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. East of 5<sup>th</sup> Street lies vacant land, a small modern strip shopping center, and, south of Main, the Chapin House (Niles City Hall) – individually listed in the national register – which marks the east edge of the historic downtown area. To the district's immediate south are parking lots and vacant land where buildings once stood. South of Cedar Street stands the remnant of old residential areas containing a church building and houses along with some modern commercial development. To the district's immediate southwest and west stand the shopping center resulting from the 1970s urban renewal project [this was discussed in the nomination's significance statement], city parking lots, and a small modern park area.

## **NOMINATION PHOTOGRAPHS AND CD-Rs**

The building-by-building inventory images do not become part of the formal nomination materials sent on to the National Register. They will serve as a permanent record in your community and at SHPO of the properties in the district at the time the nomination was done. The register does require a set of photographic prints for views that together illustrate the

character and historical and architectural high points of the district. These views will be primarily streetscape views – such as the sample ones below – but may include some building-specific views of buildings the nomination identifies as key in terms of historic and/or architectural significance. Generally two-thirds to three-quarters of the views should be streetscapes. The streetscapes must provide coverage from all parts of the district and depict as much as possible the broad range of historic resources present in the district in terms of historic functions (stores, banks, etc.), scale (large and small buildings), exterior materials, and architectural styles. Consult with the SHPO’s national register coordinator concerning the total number of views needed to adequately illustrate your district.





The *National Register Photo Policy Factsheet* lists the specific standards that must be met for photographs and CDs submitted to the register. The register requires one set of prints and a CD-R containing color images in TIF format. Follow the TIF file naming protocol set forth in the *Photo Policy Factsheet*.

In addition to these register requirements, the SHPO requires the following:

- A second set of prints for our copy of the nomination. The SHPO prefers the nomination photographs be in 5 X 7” format.
- A second CD containing a PowerPoint slide show of the images (for use in the presentation to the State Historic Preservation Review Board). If you are using the 2010 version of PowerPoint, there is an option, when you insert a “photo album,” to size the photos to fit the slide. If you do that, it doesn’t matter what size the photos are. If you are going to insert the images into the presentation individually, the size of a PowerPoint slide is 10” x 7.5”. As long as those are the dimensions, the dpi doesn’t matter. Avoid using anything higher than 300 dpi as the final PowerPoint file size will become excessive.

The nomination must include a list of the nomination photos that states the photographer(s) name(s) and date(s) when photos were shot and identifies the views by photo numbers and by image file name from the CD-R that forms a part of the formal nomination submission. This information can be entered on the prints themselves, as set forth in the *Photo Policy Factsheet*, but the Word template of the registration form also provides a place for this information near the end of the form. The photograph list should follow the format in the sample below:

**Name of Property:** Niles Downtown Historic District  
**City or Vicinity:** Niles  
**County:** Berrien **State:** MI  
**Photographer:** R. O. Christensen  
**Date Photographed:** June 2005  
**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

- 1 of 16: West end of 100 Block of Main looking NW (101 at left)  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0001.tif
- 2 of 16: 100 Block of Main N side looking NW (Newman Building at right)  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0002.tif
- 3 of 16: 200 Block of Main N side looking NE (201 at left)  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0003.tif
- 4 of 16: 200 Block of Main N side looking NW (Masonic Temple at right)  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0004.tif
- 5 of 16: West end 300 Block of Main N side looking NE (Blackmond's, 301, at left, Burns-Kerr Building at right)  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0005.tif
- 6 of 16: 305-307 E. Main looking N (1945 Morris Ketchum, Jr., storefront on left)  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0006.tif
- 7 of 16: Carnegie Library, Main and 4<sup>th</sup>, from SE  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0007.tif
- 8 of 16: 200 Block of Main S side looking SW (226-28 at left)  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0008.tif
- 9 of 16: Former Post Office, 322 Main, from N  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0009.tif
- 10 of 16: Four Flags Hotel, W façade on 4<sup>th</sup>, from SW  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0010.tif
- 11 of 16: Four Flags Hotel (right) and Ready Theater (left)  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0011.tif
- 12 of 16: Plym House (center), 416 E. Sycamore, and side of Star Building from NE  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0012.tif
- 13 of 16: 200 Block of Front W side from NE  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0013.tif
- 14 of 16: 200 Block of 2<sup>nd</sup> E side from NW  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0014.tif
- 15 of 16: General Garage (center), 109 N. 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 113 and 115 (to left) from SW  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0015.tif
- 16 of 16: Star Building, 217-25 N. 4<sup>th</sup>, from SW  
MI\_Berrien\_Niles Downtown HD\_0016.tif

## MAPS

Two forms of maps are required.

### USGS Maps

All nominations submitted to the national register must include an original United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographical map indicating the location of the nominated property and listing its UTM coordinates. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide **one full-size original paper map, 1:24000 scale, for the quadrangle or quadrangles containing the property included in the district.** USGS maps can be ordered directly from the U. S. Geological Survey through their USGS Store at <http://store.usgs.gov/> or through a number of stores and agencies throughout Michigan. For Michigan locations, visit the USGS Store site listed above and access the USGS Business Partner website. The State Historic Preservation Office will label the map if you prefer. **All labeling must be done in pencil.**

## District Maps

National register nominations for historic districts require a district map or set of maps as part of the nomination materials. The map(s) must show the locations of all historic and non-historic features of the district. If more than one map is required to cover the entire district, a key map should illustrate the entire district and its boundaries.

Maps must show all features listed in the description statement's inventory list plus other important features described in the nomination, but not listed in the inventory, such as roads and natural features such as rivers and ponds. All features must be identified. If space is limited, features should be numbered or lettered and keyed to an identification list in the margin of the map or on an attached sheet.

### Information District Maps Must Provide

- District name
- Name of community, county, and state
- Date of the map
- Significant natural features such as lakes and rivers, with names
- All streets, railroad lines, old railroad grades, and any other transportation rights of way, labeled in bold print with their names
- Lot or property lines
- Outlines or representations for all surveyed properties. The district map should show both the lot lines and the outlines of the buildings. For business districts containing buildings that occupy most of their lots, the maps must show the building outlines. Monuments and other objects may be represented by circles or dots.
- Patterned or shaded coding of footprints or representations of all buildings to indicate whether they are contributing or non-contributing to the district's historic character and significance. The outlines or representations of contributing resources should read darker than for non-contributing resources.
- For districts, street addresses for all properties listed in the description's inventory section; if the properties have numbered street addresses, no other form of identification may appear on the map.
- Boundary of the territory encompassed by the district.
- Key identifying any symbols used, including a representation for the boundary
- North directional arrow
- Scale bar (in case map is copied in larger or smaller format)

### Map Standards

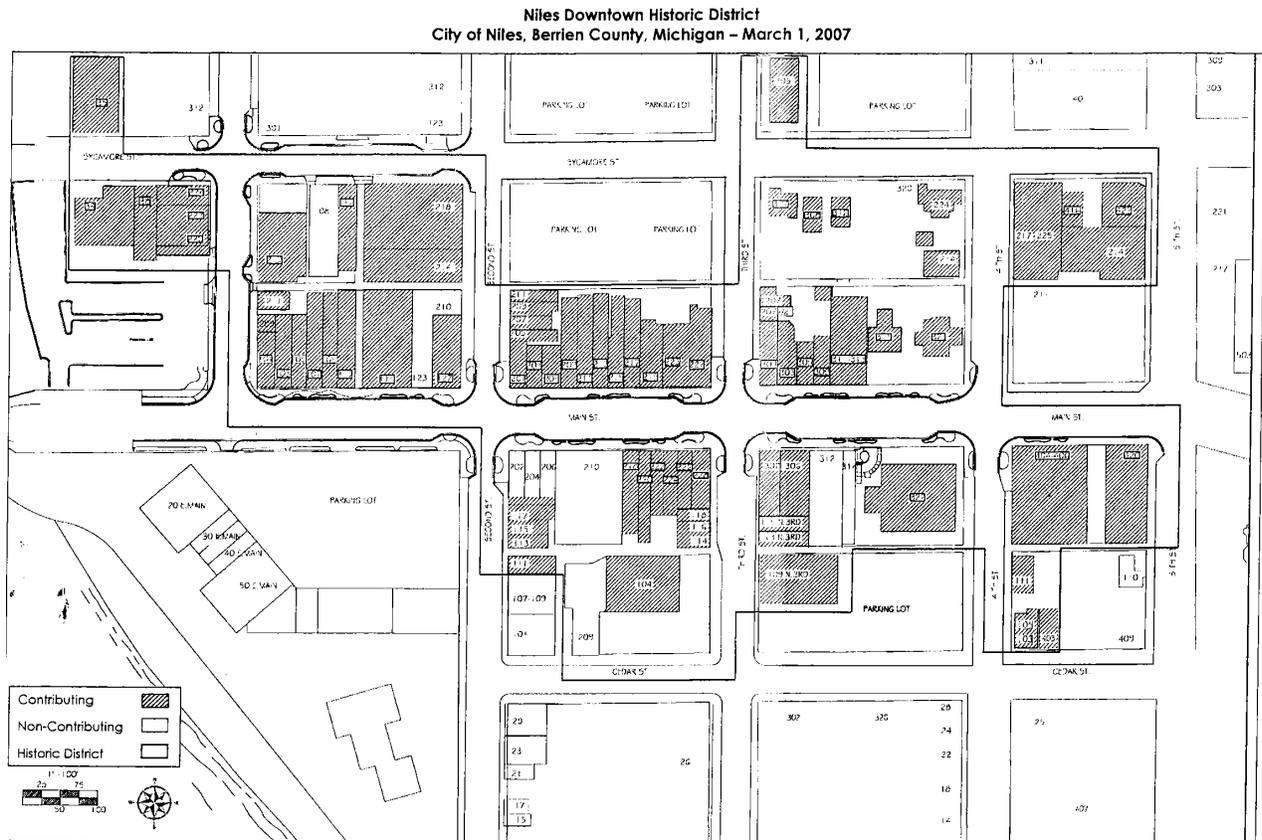
**Do not use color coding. Photocopying in black and white will render color coding unreadable.**

The final copies of maps must be printed on white paper meeting the national register's standards for archival stability – 20 pound acid-free paper with a two percent alkaline reserve. Two

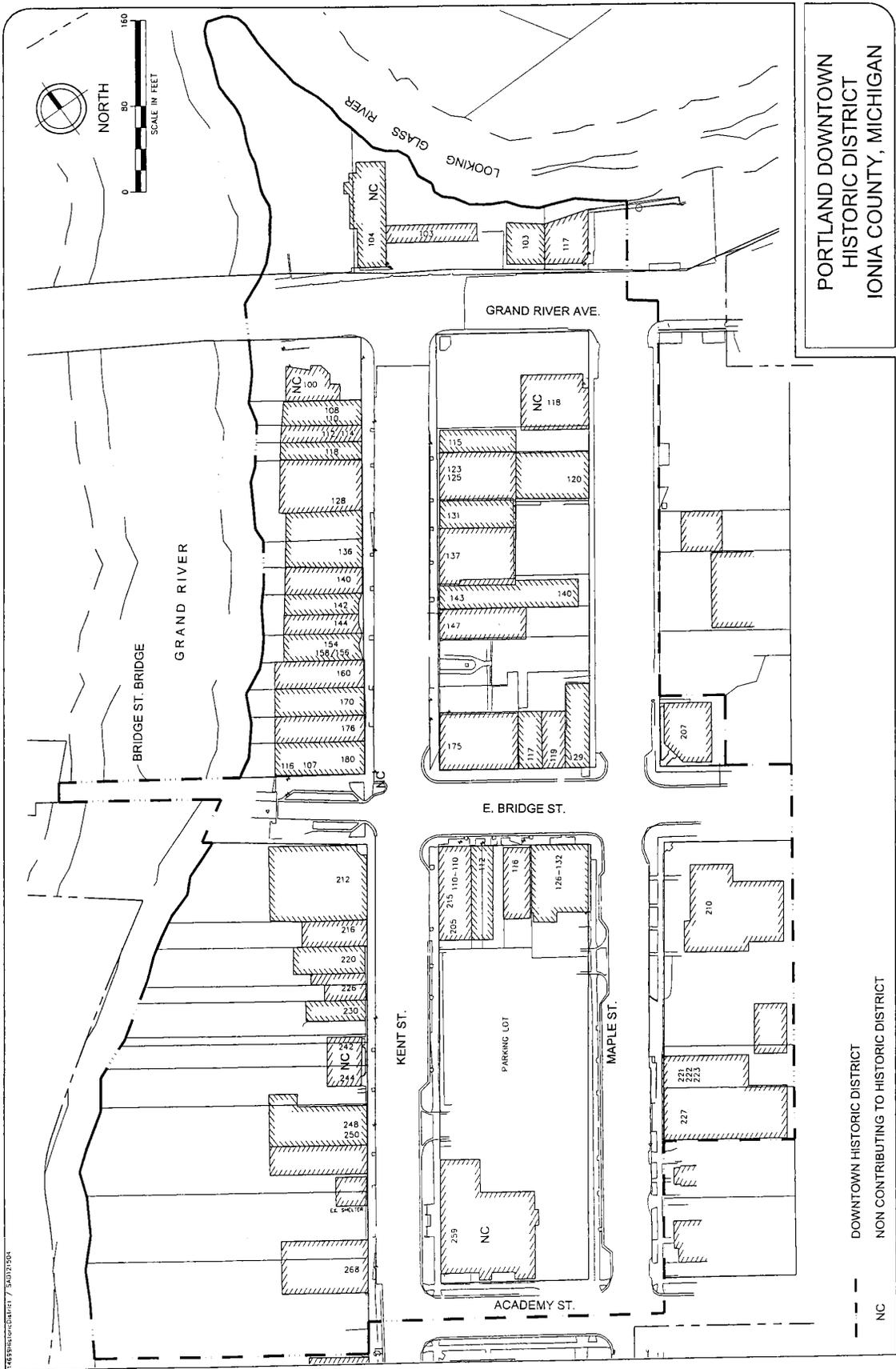
**original** copies must be provided of all maps. Tape, staples, and adhesive labels may not be used. Maps should be in 8 ½” X 11” format, if possible. Map sheets larger than 11” X 17” are not acceptable.

### Sample District Maps

The Niles and Portland maps are two of the best examples of sample downtown district maps. Both come close to, but do not fully meet, the above specs. The Niles map does not show property lines and omits a representation of the boundary line in the key. The Portland map lacks a date. Its use of “NC” for non-contributing buildings works fine in this district, where the few non-contributing buildings are large enough for the NC to fit within the building outlines, but this would not work well for a district with narrow-width non-contributing buildings.







PORTLAND DOWNTOWN  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
IONIA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

— DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT  
- - - NON CONTRIBUTING TO HISTORIC DISTRICT  
NC

## NOTIFICATION LIST

As part of the formal national register nomination process, the SHPO will need to provide written notice to the owners of all private and public property within the district boundary, including vacant lots and parking lots. The letters are prepared and sent out one to two months prior to the review board meeting at which the nomination is presented. **As part of the nomination project, you will need to provide a list of all properties with their owners and mailing addresses for SHPO to use in preparing the notification letters.**

The list will include all properties and parcels organized in street and house number, with each address followed by the name and mailing address of the owner. Provide the list in Microsoft Excel (so we can generate the letters efficiently) using the following categories: First Name, Last Name, Professional Title, Company or Organization, Address 1, Address 2, City, State, Zip Code. For public, institutional, or company/corporate-owned properties, list the name and title of the appropriate official to be notified. The list should be prepared just before it is needed by SHPO to ensure that owner information is as up-to-date as possible.

## A FINAL POINT: STORING THE RESULTS FOR THE FUTURE

In reviewing this instruction manual, you will see that a lot of work is required. By the time the project is completed you will have made an enormous effort in terms of time and perhaps money. You will have uncovered a mass of historical information about the business district that was probably not known beforehand. You will have developed substantial data in the form of written material, maps, and photographs and color images. Following the instructions in this guide will provide you with a historical resource that should be useful for years to come. At the most basic level, it will provide historical background information for property owners, public officials, or members of the public who are interested in history. But the information can also be used to provide historical background on buildings for property owners to use in seeking federal income tax credits in connection with the rehabilitation of National Register of Historic Places-listed income-producing properties. In the future there may again be some form of state tax credit program for historic properties for which this information will be useful. Even if the property owners and community are not interested now in creating a local historic district for the business district, they may become interested in the future for one reason or another. Carrying out the nomination project will provide both historical background and detailed photographs of buildings as they existed at a specific time that will greatly reduce the time and costs involved in completing the documentation necessary for establishing the district under state law. The historical data may also be useful for highlighting the business district's history or the history of individual historic buildings for heritage tourism promotional activities including such things as walking tour brochure and website development and historical markers. Who knows what other uses for the information may come along?

My point is that you will have created a valuable resource of historical information about the business district that should be carefully housed in local repositories so it is still available in the future. The planning for the project should include planning for what will be done with the results – for keeping them in the public domain rather than in someone's house or a back corner

of city hall where new people who know nothing about the project and the investment of time and money it represents will decide what happens to them! The State Historic Preservation Office will require a full set of the products to enable it to review and comment on the work as it is done and to forward the nomination to the national register. But having a full copy of the project's products as part of a permanent library – if there is such a thing – in the local government's office that has charge of planning and/or economic development activities seems a good idea. Housing a copy there **and** in the reference or local history section of the local library is also good. Having full sets in both of those places **and** in some regional repository such as a nearby university library or archives is even better. Develop a plan for housing the results as part of the work plan for the project.

January 27, 2012