

City of Detroit

CITY COUNCIL

Historic Designation Advisory Board

204 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-3487 Fax: (313) 224-4336
e-mail: cc-historic@ci.detroit.mi.us

The Proposed Historic Detroit Financial District Final Report



Charge: By resolution dated October 5, 2010 the Detroit City Council charged the Historic Designation Advisory Board, a study committee, with the official study of the proposed Detroit Financial Historic District in accordance with Chapter 25 of the 1984 Detroit City Code and the Michigan Local Historic Districts Acts.

The proposed Historic Detroit Financial District is located just a few blocks north of the Detroit River. It is generally bounded on the South by West Jefferson Avenue, (which follows the Detroit River); east by Woodward Avenue, (which begins at the Detroit River

and runs northward dividing the city in half east and west); north by West Lafayette Avenue; and west by Washington Boulevard. Occupying about eight blocks in the grid-plan section of downtown, the proposed district contains thirty-six buildings, all but one constructed between 1900 and 1964. The district's most visually prominent features are its bank/office towers. Dating largely from the 1910s and 20s but also including Modernist architecture from the late 1950s and early 1960s, together they provide much of the form to today's Detroit skyline.

Boundaries: The boundaries of the proposed Detroit Financial Historic District are the same as the National Register Historic District and are outlined in heavy black lines on the attached map. The boundary description is as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the centerline of Woodward Avenue and the centerline of Jefferson Avenue E, to the centerline of Congress Street E to the centerline of Bates Street to the centerline of Cadillac Square to the centerline of Woodward Avenue to Fort Street W thence to the centerline of Griswold Street to the centerline of Lafayette Avenue W to the westerly line of Lot 17 (extended) of "Re-subdivision of Lot 14," Subdivision to the centerline of the alley south of and parallel to Lafayette Avenue W to the centerline of Shelby Street to the centerline of Lafayette Avenue W to the centerline of Cass Avenue to the centerline of the alley south of and parallel to Lafayette Avenue W to the centerline of Washington Boulevard to the centerline of Larned Street W to the centerline of Shelby Street to the centerline of the alley south of and parallel to Congress Street W to the centerline of Griswold Street to a line (extended) 50 feet N of the N line of West Jefferson Avenue to a line 108 feet W of the W line of Griswold Street to the centerline of West Jefferson Avenue to the point of beginning (POB).

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries for Historic Detroit Financial District are designed to include the concentration of historic bank and office buildings and other historic downtown buildings in the Financial District while omitting modern office buildings, parking garages, and parking lots that would not currently contribute to the district. The boundaries of the local district are the same as the National Register district.

History:

The contents of this report are taken largely from the Detroit Financial District National Register form prepared by Rebecca Binnio Savage (AKT Peerless Environmental Services) and Robert O. Christensen (MI SHPO) 2009.

Founded by the French in 1701, Detroit remained a small settlement into the early nineteenth century. In 1810 the federal census showed a population of 770. By 1820, 1,442 residents were reported. City government, with a mayor and common council was established in 1824. Detroit's population rose to 2,222 in 1830, quadrupled to 9,192 by 1840, and, with the beginnings of both of large-scale industrial development and immigration from Europe, more than doubled again to 21,091 in 1850 and to 45,619 in 1860. By the late-nineteenth century Detroit was becoming an industrial powerhouse, with a population of 116,000 by 1880. By the early 1880s manufacturing of iron and

steel products dominated the city economy, with railroad cars, car wheels and axles, locomotive and car springs structural iron work, engines and boilers, machinery, and stoves heading up the long list of metal products produced there.

In the 1820s and 30s the city's business district was concentrated along Jefferson Avenue and Woodbridge and Atwater streets near the Detroit River. Until 1824 the area occupied by the Financial District formed part of a federal Military Reserve bounded generally (in today's terms) by Jefferson Avenue on the south, Griswold Street on the east, Michigan Avenue on the northeast, and beyond Washington Boulevard (one-time Wayne Street) on the west. The heart of the reserve was the former Fort Lernoult, begun by the British in 1778 and renamed Fort Shelby by the Americans in 1813 when they took possession after the British finally departed from Detroit. The fort centered at approximately the intersection of Fort and Shelby streets. In 1824 the federal government turned the south edge of the reserve over to the city between Jefferson and Larned streets and in 1826 it abandoned the rest. The fort was demolished in the spring of 1827 and the reserve platted into today's pattern of streets, including the parts of Shelby, Congress, Fort, Lafayette and Washington in and adjacent to the Financial District. Some of the streets were not fully opened for several years.

By the mid-nineteenth century Detroit's business district was focused on Jefferson Avenue, which adjoined the area on the south, and the blocks of Woodward Avenue from the Detroit River north past Jefferson toward the Cadillac Square area. The nearby future Financial District developed into a predominantly residential neighborhood in the early years after its platting. Fort and Lafayette west of Griswold both assumed a high-class residential character by the mid-nineteenth century. Several leading Protestant churches dotted the area--successive 1833-35 and 1859-63 First Baptist Church buildings at the northwest corner of Fort and Griswold, the latter an imposing Romanesque structure; the Second Presbyterian Church building of 1849-50, much modernized in 1869, at the southeast corner of Lafayette and Washington; and the Gothic Revival St. Paul's Episcopal, built in 1852 at Shelby and Congress' northeast corner.

Public Buildings

What is now the Financial District has been located near the heart of the city from its earliest days. The building that served as Michigan's territorial and then state capitol from its construction in 1828 until 1847, when Lansing became the state's capital city, stood in what is now Capitol Park at Griswold and State Streets little more than a block to the north. The county courthouse stood at the southeast Griswold/Congress corner from 1845 to 1871. Detroit's first city hall stood in what is now Cadillac Square just east of the district, and from 1871 to 1961 the city's grand Second Empire City Hall stood facing Woodward Avenue and Cadillac Square between Fort Street and Michigan Avenue, with its back to Griswold Street across from the Dime Security Trust, and First State Bank Building sites.

In 1858-60 a new Federal Building containing the post office, customs house, and courts was constructed at the northwest corner of Griswold and Larned (a parking garage stands at the site today), adjacent to the district. This large granite Italianate building was

outgrown by the 1880s and construction of a much larger Federal Building begun in 1892 in the block where the district's present Federal Building now stands. The Richardsonian Romanesque building was completed in 1897. The 1890s building, in turn, was demolished in 1931 and replaced with the present Federal Building, constructed 1932-34. Art Deco in style but with Neoclassical references, the ten-story building nearly fills the block. The new building was occupied by 3,700 federal employees, some working in departments unique to the era: the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Alcoholic Beverage Unit and the Industrial Alcohol Offices, and Steamboat Inspection Services. In 1995 the building was re-dedicated as the Theodore Levin U.S. Courthouse.

The district also contains the headquarters Building of the Detroit Fire Department, Michigan oldest fire department. In 1825 the newly established city government passed a fire ordinance, modeled after New York's, and purchased the first fire engine. Not until 1849 did the city construct a first permanent fire station building at the corner of Larned and Riopelle Street.

The Detroit Fire Department Headquarters Buildings stands on a site continuously occupied by the department since about 1840. The site at the northeast Larned/Washington corner was occupied by Washington Market, one of several city market houses, established in 1836. Even before that, in the 1820s, the city hay scales were located there. In 1837 the city determined to create a new Engine Co. #4. An engine house, perhaps little more than a shed, was built for it behind the market, on Washington Boulevard by the alley, around 1840.

In 1856 the farmers' market building and associated property was turned over to the use of the fire department. A brick fire station with tall fire watchtower was soon built at the old firehouse location next to the former market building.

The present massive five-story Headquarters Building was constructed in 1929 and continues to serve. In addition to the department headquarters, it also initially housed the following fire-fighting units serving the business district: Water Tower #1, High Pressure plump #1, Engine #1, and Ladder #1. Detroit architect Hans Gehrke (1886-1969) designed the building, the largest of fourteen buildings he did for the department between 1918 and 1931. Foursquare and almost fortress-like, faced in red brick rather than more flashy materials, and styled in a sober Neoclassicism, the building imparts a practical, down-to-business appearance. Despite the no-nonsense appearance, however, a close look reveals a wealth of cartouche and other forms depicting fire-fighting iconography. This is one of the great buildings of the city.

Banking & Commerce

The Financial District contains what was the heart of downtown Detroit's primary financial and office district. Detroit's first bank, the Detroit Bank, was founded primarily by Boston investors in 1806 and closed two years later. In 1818 a second bank, the Bank of Michigan, was established. This, at first, occupied the one-time Detroit Bank building at the northwest corner of Jefferson and Randolph, several blocks east of today's Financial District, but in 1831 moved west to a location on Jefferson near Woodward.

Thus the year 1831 should probably be seen as marking the infant beginnings of the Financial District.

Other banks soon followed in locating along Jefferson near Griswold. In 1832 the Farmers and Mechanics' Bank, established in 1829, occupied a stone building on the south side of Jefferson between Griswold and Shelby. In 1836 the Bank of Michigan moved again, to the southwest corner of Jefferson and Griswold; their new Neoclassical limestone building was an architectural landmark in its day.

A major early development was the 1852 construction at the southeast corner of Griswold/Larned corner of the four-story Rotunda Building which Farmer describes as Detroit's "first building erected especially with a view of furnishing office accommodations." The location may have been considered prime since it was only a block off both Jefferson and Woodward Avenues, the city's two key business arteries, as well as being near the courthouse. Among other tenants the Rotunda housed the private bank of Philo Parson and the successor firm, Parson & Fisher, from 1857 to 1863 and then the First National Bank in 1863-65.

The district's buildings began to house financial institutions and prime office space by the 1850s and 60s and these uses have continued to dominate in the Financial District down to the present. Eighteen of the district's thirty-six standing buildings – constructed between 1900 and 1971 – initially housed banks/financial institutions or a combination of financial institutions and office space. They are:

- 205 W. Congress. Bankers Trust Co. 1925
- 131 W. Fort (First Penobscot Building). Detroit Savings Bank and Detroit Trust Co. each occupied half of the ground floor 1906
- 151 W. Fort. State Savings Bank 1900
- 160 W. Fort. Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Detroit Branch 1926 (expanded 1951)
- 201 W. Fort. Detroit Trust Co. 1915 (expanded 1925-26)
- 211 W. Fort. Detroit Bank & Trust 1963-64
- 1 Griswold. Standard Savings & Loan Association 1930
- 500 Griswold (Union Trust Building). National Bank of Commerce, Union Trust Co., and Union Title & Guaranty Co. 1929
- 535 Griswold. Central Trust Co. 1925
- 615 Griswold (Ford Building). Bank of Michigan 1920s
- 645 Griswold (Third Penobscot Building). Guardian Trust Co., Guardian Detroit Bank, Guardian Detroit Group, Inc., Guardian Safe Deposit Co.
- 719 Griswold (Dime Savings Bank Building). Dime Savings Bank 1914
- 735 Griswold. Security Trust Co. 1925
- 751 Griswold. First State Bank 1924-25
- 607 Shelby. U. S. Mortgage Bond Co., Mortgage Guaranty Co., U. S. Trust Co. of Detroit, U. S. Title Agency, Inc. 1925
- 501 Woodward. Detroit Federal Savings & Loan Association 1971
- 611 Woodward. National Bank of Detroit 1959
- 660 Woodward. First National Bank 1922

These buildings have housed many of the leading banks and financial institutions that made Detroit Michigan's financial center. Among them are several buildings associated with what is today Michigan's oldest bank. Comerica, a former Detroit-based corporation that resulted from several generations of mergers, traces its origins to the Detroit Savings Fund Institution, established in 1849. The bank (reorganized in 1871 as the Detroit Savings Bank and later called simply Detroit Bank) occupied quarters in the first Penobscot Building located on Fort Street from 1906 to 1921, before its merger in 1956 with a group of banks that included the former Detroit Trust Company. Detroit Trust occupied the building at 201 W. Fort. Merger into a new Detroit Bank & Trust Company, the resulting bank moved in 1964 into the office tower at 211 W. Fort – directly across Shelby from the old headquarters – built for them. In 1982 Detroit Bank & Trust assumed the Comerica name. In 1992 Comerica merged with the Manufacturers Bank of Detroit. That bank had been founded by Edsel and Henry Ford in 1933 upon the wreckage of the Detroit Banker Company, a bank holding company in which Ford had also been the leading investors. Detroit Bankers had been found insolvent during the bank holidays early in 1933. Manufacturers first occupied space in the third Penobscot building on Griswold but moved in 1944 to the former State Savings Bank building on W. Fort previously occupied by the People Savings Bank, vacant since Peoples collapsed in 1933. The building served as its headquarters until 1977, when the bank moved into the newly built Renaissance Center located a short distance east of the district. In 1992 Manufacturers merged with Comerica. Comerica, the largest bank based in Michigan, moved into the Detroit Center tower in 1993. The tower stands outside the district, but directly across Woodward Avenue from the Union Trust (Guardian) Building.

Another of the most important of Detroit's banks historically was the First National Bank of Detroit, which built the building at 660 Woodward in 1920-22. First National was Michigan's first national bank when it was established in 1863, only a year after the passage of the National Banking Act. That bank became the First and Old Detroit National Bank in 1914 as a result of a merger. The name was shortened back to First National Bank about the time the new building was occupied. First National became part of the above noted Detroit Bankers Company holding company and was a casualty.

The district also contains the former home of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago's Detroit branch office, located at 160 W. Fort. Congress established the Federal Reserve System in 1913 as a means of fostering a sound banking system, and Michigan was placed within a district served from Chicago. The rapid growth of Detroit as a banking and financial center soon justified the need for a branch of the Chicago bank, and the Detroit branch bank opened in 1918. Temporary space soon proved inadequate, and the first part of the present building was built in 1926-27. A much larger expansion was constructed in 1949-51 and the older building gutted and rebuilt inside. The completed building was dedicated in 1953. The building housed the Federal Reserve branch bank until 2005, when the operation moved to a new location a few miles away.

The Union Trust or Guardian Building is important – or notorious – for its own direct association with an important episode in American banking history, the banking crash of

1933. The Union Trust Company that built the building in 1927-29 was one of a great number of Detroit financial institutions that through mergers, the last until December 1929, became part of an umbrella holding company, the Guardian Detroit Union Group, in which Henry Ford was the largest owner. As the nation sank into Depression in the early 1930s, Detroit's economy, so closely tied to auto manufacturing, plummeted. The Guardian Detroit Union Group holding company continued to pay its normal dividends despite the worsening condition of its member banks. Federal and state examiners declared the Union Guardian Trust Company, the former Union Trust, insolvent early in 1933. In view of the weakened condition of the holding companies and their member financial institutions such as Union Guardian Trust, the loss of confidence resulting from the failure of this one bank was seen as threatening a much more widespread collapse of the banking system. As a result, on February 24, 1933, Michigan Governor William A. Comstock closed all the state's banks to avoid bank "runs" while examiners looked at the solvency of the banks. The "bank holiday" was to last eight days, but remained in effect when President Franklin D. Roosevelt came into office early in March. Union Guardian Trust's insolvency led directly to Michigan's banking crash and to a nationwide crisis of confidence that had banks in a majority of states closed even before President Roosevelt declared the federal "bank Holiday" shortly after his inauguration early in March 1933.

In addition the area encompassed by the district has been the site of many of downtown Detroit's pre-eminent office buildings since the Rotunda Building was constructed in 1852. The landmark Ford, Dime, First National Bank, Detroit Free Press, Buhl, Penobscot, and Union Trust (Guardian) buildings, along with less massive buildings, alongside them such as the Murphy, Telegraph, Marquette Buildings, Standard Savings Bank, U. S. Mortgage Bond, and Detroit Fire & Marine Insurance Company buildings, form downtown's greatest concentration of early twentieth-century office buildings. The directories show that, in addition to the banks and financial institutions that occupied the lower stories of many of these buildings, the buildings' upper stories housed a vast array of offices that include lawyers, accountants and investment brokers, collection agencies, insurance agencies and firms, realtors and real estate developers, building contractors and building materials firms, company offices, and more. Many of the city's leading business firms leased office space in the Penobscot and other prestige buildings in the Financial District.

Buildings in the district also housed Detroit's stock exchange early in its history. The Detroit Stock Exchange was founded as the Detroit Brokers' Association in 1907 but was renamed in 1910. The exchange began with ten members but had forty-three by the early 1920s. It hosted trading in local issues of major Detroit concerns such as Parke-Davis Pharmaceuticals, Detroit Edison, Michigan Sugar, Detroit & Cleveland Navigation Co., Michigan Stove Co., Burroughs Adding Machines, REO Motors, and General Motors. The exchange first established quarters in the Ford Building, but around 1920 moved to the second Penobscot Building on Congress. In 1930 it built a new building at 415 Griswold, southwest corner of Larned (just outside the district). In 1950 trading on the exchange was opened up to members of other stock exchanges and members of the National Association of Securities Dealers. The Detroit Stock Exchange closed in 1976

and the building was demolished in the late 1980s (a parking garage now stands at the site).

Significant Persons

The district also possesses historic significance for its direct historical associations with a number of important Detroit and Michigan business figures.

Murphy Family

Simon J. Murphy and William H. Murphy were such figures. The Murphy family through their Simon J. Murphy Company and Murphy Power Company was responsible for five buildings in the district, the three Penobscot Buildings plus the Murphy and Marquette Buildings. Maine lumberman Simon J. Murphy (1815-1905) came to Michigan in 1866 to establish a lumbering and sawmilling operation on pine lands he and his Maine partners, Eddy, Murphy & Co., had purchased. He prospered through sawmills in Port Huron and Bay City and a lumber business in Detroit. An oil discovery on his ranch in Whittier, California, resulted in establishment of the Murphy Oil Company, and there were successful investments in Mesabi Range mine property that was leased to a steel company. S. J. Murphy had his office in the Moffat Block, which stood where the third Penobscot Building stands now. Murphy remained an active businessman until his death at the age of eighty-nine. He became a large property owner in the downtown, his properties including the sites of the Penobscot Buildings and much of the frontage along W. Congress within the district.

Simon Murphy's son William H. Murphy learned the lumber business with his father's firm in Bay City beginning in the late 1870s and soon returned to Detroit and became associated with Simon J. Murphy in all his enterprises. As the family's lumber operations wound down in Michigan, Simon and William Murphy established a new lumber business in Wisconsin beginning in 1886 and later the Pacific Lumber Company in the area near Eureka, California. The offices in the Moffat Building remained the headquarters for the family businesses.

Like his father, W. H. also diversified. He was one of the initial investors in the Detroit Automobile Company, Henry Ford's first foray into the auto manufacturing business, established in 1899. This was not a success, but Murphy then became one of the six initial investors in Ford's second company, the Henry Ford Company, founded in 1901, and served as treasurer as he had done in Detroit Auto Company. In 1902, Murphy and several other investors then split from the Henry Ford Company and founded the Cadillac Motor Car Company. That company was much more of a success by the time the investors sold out to General Motors in 1909.

Simon J. Murphy established the Murphy Power Company shortly before his death. The company originated with Murphy's plan for a building "to be rented to manufacturers or concerns requiring power, using steam heat." His Murphy Power Building (now called just the "Murphy Building") on Congress Street, containing the power plant in the basement, was put into operation during 1903. In the meantime Murphy's first Penobscot Building was under construction nearby, and Murphy considered the possibility of using

steam from the Murphy Power Building to heat it. The result was that Murphy's company obtained a franchise from the city to provide steam heat service to buildings in a district bounded by Randolph on the east, Lafayette on the north, Fourth Street on the west, and the Detroit River on the south. The generating capacity was soon inadequate, and the Murphy estate, headed by W. H. Murphy, then built a second Murphy Power Building, now the Marquette Building, farther west on Congress in 1906 to replace the first in providing steam heat for this district (the 1909 directory shows the power company operating out of the present Marquette Building only). The building also housed the Murphy Storage and Ice Company, apparently a cold storage operation that included a fur storage. From the first the Central Heating Company, a Detroit Edison affiliate (absorbed into the company in 1915) that began providing steam heat in other parts of the downtown about the same time, purchased the Murphy system's surplus. Central Heating bought out the Murphy Power Company in 1914. Detroit Thermal now operates the downtown steam heating service.

The Murphys' pre-eminent achievement in the downtown was the development of the three Penobscot Buildings – the name a reference to the Maine river by whose banks stood the logging camp in which Simon J. Murphy began his career – in the 1903-29 period. S. J. Murphy bought the land on which the two earlier buildings were constructed in 1902, and the first Penobscot Building on Fort Street was completed in 1905 shortly after Simon J. Murphy's death. William H. Murphy and the offices of the Simon J. Murphy Company soon occupied quarters in the new building. The Simon J. Murphy Company, headed by W. H., completed the second Penobscot Building in 1916 and the third, fronting on Griswold, in 1929. W. H. Murphy drove home the steel skeleton's final rivet in a dedication ceremony in 1928.

Buhl Family

Another important Detroit commercial family with direct associations to the district was the Buhl family, associated with the Buhl Building. Christian H. Buhl, who arrived in Detroit in 1833, was the first of the branch of the family associated with the site. In 1847 he and Charles Ducharme formed a wholesale hardware business, Buhl & Ducharme that soon became, as Clarence Burton's account claims, the "largest wholesale hardware house in the west" and remained in business under the Buhl Sons name well into the twentieth century. C. H. Buhl died in 1896.

One of Christian Buhl's sons, Theodore De Long Buhl (1844-1907), served between 1896 and 1907 as president of the hardware business, by then Buhl Sons Co. Theodore according to Burton, "was also associated with his father in the purchase and development of the Sharon Iron Works at Sharon, Pennsylvania, and was one of the organizers of the Detroit Copper & Brass Rolling Mills, while at the time of his death he was president of the Buhl Malleable Company, the Buhl Stamping Company, the Diamond Stamp Ware Company and the National Can Company."

Theodore's son, Arthur H. Buhl (born 1878), cut his teeth at Sharon Iron and Buhl Steel in Sharon, PA, in 1892-95 before moving into the family hardware business where he became president in 1916. By 1930 the firm had an estimated 350 employees. In 1907

Arthur assumed the presidency of the Buhl Malleable Company, established by his father in 1899. Arthur H. Buhl was also president of the Buhl Land Company. In 1924-25 his company built the present Buhl Building on the site of the former one. Christian Buhl had purchased part of the present Buhl Building site in 1860 and in 1868 built what was then called the Bank Block at the corner of Griswold and Congress. In 1887 he renovated that and three other buildings into the first Buhl Building, which occupied the site on which the present Buhl was constructed.

Edward and John Ford

The Ford Building was built as an investment property for industrialists Edward Ford of Toledo, Ohio, and his son, John B. Ford, of Wyandotte, Michigan. Edward (1843-1920) was founder and president and John B. vice-president of the Edward Ford Plate Glass Company, established in 1899 at Rossford, Ohio, near Toledo. The company merged in 1930 with the Libbey-Owens Glass Company of Toledo to form the Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company. Edward Ford's father, Capt. John B. Ford (1811-1903), was the pioneer manufacturer of plate glass in the United States, operating glassworks at New Albany and Jeffersonville, Indiana, Louisville, Kentucky, and Creighton and finally Ford City, Pennsylvania, beginning in 1864. Edward became president of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company when it was founded in 1882 but withdrew in 1897.

Edward Ford was also president and son John B. Ford vice-president and general manager of the Michigan Chemical (soon renamed Michigan Alkali) Company in Wyandotte. Capt. John B. Ford had begun the plant in 1891 because the underground salt beds there would provide the glassworks its own supply of soda ash for glass-making. Michigan Alkali was soon marketing soda ash for soap production as well and producing baking soda and caustic soda. In 1898 the Fords established a separate J. B. Ford Company to utilize alkali for other products such as cleaning preparations for household use that could be sold in smaller quantities.

Architecture

The Financial District's buildings were designed by a who's who of important architects from Detroit and the nation – including D. H. Burnham & Co.; Donaldson & Meier; Albert Kahn, Inc.; McKim, Mead & White; Smith, Hinchman & Grylls; and Minoru Yamasaki.

- **Daniel H. Burnham & Co.** – Chicago architect Daniel H. Burnham (1846-1912) entered into partnership with John Wellborn Root in Burnham & Root, architects, in Chicago in 1873. Root died in 1891, and Burnham practiced on his own until 1896, when he established the firm of D. H. Burnham & Co. Burnham & Root were pioneers in tall building design, and Burnham – well known for his role as chief of construction for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and as an urban planner – also continued to make tall office buildings a specialty. D. H. Burnham & Co. became one of the nation's largest architectural firms. Burnham's firm designed four early tall buildings for Detroit. The fourteen-story Majestic Building built just outside the district area in 1896 has not survived, but the other three remain. Two stand within the district. Both the eighteen-story Ford Building, erected in 1907-08,

and the 1913-14 Dime Savings Bank Building followed the Chicago office building tradition of toning down the historicism – here there are simplified Neoclassical references at the bottom and top – and expressing the steel frame with the clean sharp lines of the tall mid-level shafts faced in light terra cotta. The Dime Building commission may have come into the Burnham office before D. H. Burnham's death June 12, 1912, but the building was constructed under his successor's firm's direction. A July 1915 article in *The Architectural Record* lists both D. H. Burnham & Co. and the successor firm Graham, Burnham & Co. as architects. A fourth Detroit project, the David Whitney Building (1915) at Woodward and Grand Circus Park, was also apparently designed after Burnham's death, by Graham, Burnham & Co.

- **Donaldson & Meier** - The Detroit firm of Donaldson & Meier was founded by John M. Donaldson (1854–1941) and Henry J. Meier (d. 1917) and was responsible for the design of such late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Detroit landmarks as the First Unitarian Church, Sacred Heart Seminary, St. Aloysius Church, and the 1895 Union Trust Building that stood at the northeast Griswold/Congress corner where the National Bank of Detroit (now Chase Bank) now stands. Donaldson came to the U. S. from Stirling, Scotland as an infant, and completed his education in Munich and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. His partnership with Henry Meier began in 1880. In the Financial District, Donaldson & Meier's eleven-story Union Trust Building may have led to the firm being selected to design two surviving early tall office buildings in the Financial District, the thirteen-story original Penobscot Building, completed in 1905, and a twenty-four story annex that, completed in 1916, became known as the New Penobscot Building. In 1916 the firm completed an addition to McKim, Mead & White's State Savings Bank (by then Peoples State Bank) at Fort and Shelby Streets by extending the building south to Congress, while closely matching the design of the original building. Donaldson & Meier also designed the 1929 David Stott Building, a twenty-nine-story office building located on Griswold north of the Financial District.
- **Albert Kahn (1869–1942)** – German-born Albert Kahn came to Detroit as a youth. He worked for Mason & Rice, one of Detroit's leading architectural firms, from 1884 until 1896, becoming their chief designer in 1891. From 1896 until 1902 he practiced in partnership with others. He established "Albert Kahn, Architect," with Ernest Wilby as associate, in 1902, and Albert Kahn, Inc., Architects & Engineers, in 1918. The firm developed a huge national and international practice as factory designers beginning in the early twentieth century, but industrial design was only part of their vast and varied architectural business. They designed, for example, a huge amount of commercial building work in Detroit, including auto dealership and garage buildings, and many of the buildings on the University of Michigan central campus in Ann Arbor, including Angell Hall, Hill Auditorium, and the Clements Library. One of the firm's specialties was bank design. A 1929 company publication, *Architectural Treatment of Bank Buildings*, illustrates numerous large and small examples of the firm's bank buildings in Michigan and elsewhere. The Kahn firm occupied the top floor of the Marquette Building from 1917 until 1931 and, while housed there,

designed many of the district's buildings. Known buildings by the Kahn firm in the district are:

Detroit Trust Company, 1915; expanded 1925-26
Vinton Building, 1916
First National Bank Building, 1920-22
First State Bank, 1924-25
Security Trust Building, 1924-25
Detroit Free Press Building, 1925
National Bank of Detroit, 1959

The majority of these buildings, like the great majority of the banks illustrated in *Architectural Treatment*, are Neoclassical, often with monumental porticos. The Detroit Trust Company and First State Bank buildings particularly stand out among Neoclassical bank buildings in Detroit and Michigan for their wealth of detailing. The 1924-25 First State Bank uses its street-corner location to advantage, with Ionic porticos on both streets sheltering windows that fill most of the wall space. Hawkins Ferry in *The Buildings of Detroit* (p. 226) notes the resemblance of Kahn's 1915 Detroit Trust Company building--now the street-corner third of the building, which was expanded to the west in 1925-26--to McKim, Mead & White's 1904 Knickerbocker Trust Building in New York with its Corinthian columns and floridly detailed attic. The Detroit building, enlarged by Kahn in the original style, now presents a broad three-part, eight-column front that complements the McKim, Mead & White-designed bank building across Shelby to the east. Despite a modernization in 1964 that replaced the façade back of the portico with reflective glass, the fundamental character of the building remains evident.

The massive First National Bank Building is also Neoclassical, with a three-story Corinthian portico – eighteen columns in all – dominating the base of the twenty-four-story three-part façade that faces both Woodward Avenue and Cadillac Square. The massive office building towers over the entire block of Woodward in which it stands, its idiosyncratic shape designed to fit an oddly shaped site that zigzags around the back side of the block. The building otherwise seems more typical of Kahn's office building work in that, above the portico, the tall façade are kept starkly simple, with large areas of windows.

Kahn's 1916-17 twelve-story Vinton Building was the first built of three buildings in the district that display a Romanesque-inspired character. His 1913 Kresge (now Kales) Building on Grand Circus Park also displayed the low gabled form atop its tall and narrow front, but without any of the overtly Romanesque detailing.

Romanesque as a style for bank buildings seems to have come into popularity in the wake of construction of York & Sawyer's Bowery Savings Bank Building at 110 E. 42nd Street, New York, completed in 1923. Kahn's Security Trust Bank building followed in 1925. Although the building was enlarged with an incongruous added two stories in the 1960s, the bank's original front, with its tall arches and central entry

frame displaying intricate detailing carved in limestone, remains largely intact. It is the only Romanesque-inspired bank building illustrated in *Architectural Treatment of Bank Buildings*.

- **McKim, Mead & White** – Established in 1879, the New York firm of McKim, Mead & White (Charles Follen McKim, William R. Mead, and Stanford White) grew to become perhaps the most successful and influential architectural firm in the United States. The New York City-based firm was responsible, among other well known projects, for the monumental Pennsylvania Station in New York, the Boston Public Library and the design of the Columbia University campus. For Detroit McKim, Mead & White designed the stately Neoclassical State Savings Bank, built in 1900. The building is already individually listed in the national register.

Within the Financial District Smith, Hinchman & Grylls designed three of Detroit's tallest office towers of the 1920s, the Buhl, the Penobscot and the Union Trust Buildings. The three constitute the architectural and artistic high point of 1920s bank/office building design not only in Detroit but in all of Michigan. SH & G's chief designer during the later 1920s, Wirt C. Rowland, was the person primarily responsible for these buildings being the architectural and artistic achievements they are. The twenty-six-story 1925 Buhl Building is unique for the cruciform plan of the office tower that allows for light and air for all offices without any central light court. The building is another of those that displays something of a Romanesque decorative scheme in the tall arches at the second-story level and in the low gables that crown the ends of the arms and the arches below them. The building's location at Griswold and Congress had been the site of the previous Buhl Building, constructed for Christian H. Buhl.

The Penobscot Building, actually the third and largest part of the Penobscot Building complex, was built in 1927-29. All three of the Penobscot buildings were constructed for former lumberman Simon J. Murphy or the Simon J. Murphy Company that succeeded him. The forty-seven-story building is Detroit's and Michigan's tallest bank/office building of the 1920s period that saw these towers constructed in many of southern Michigan's cities. It remained Detroit's tallest building for fifty years. Unlike the Buhl Building, Penobscot's detailing and its blocky form, rising in myriad setbacks at the top, are very much Art Deco in feeling. The building's five-story base is dominated by a huge arched entrance portal.

Wirt Rowland's 1927-29 Union Trust or Guardian Building, today a National Historic Landmark, is the crowing achievement Detroit's bank/office towers of the 1920s and one of the nation's outstanding example of Art Deco. The long but narrow forty-story building is notable for its profile, with tall and narrow masses at each end that rise into towers above the main roofline, and for its themed use of simple geometric shapes, particularly the rectangular stepped arch form, outside and in, to decorate such features as windows below the roofline and the lobby entrances and elevators bays. It is notable, especially, for its lavish use of different materials and colors in the exterior and interior.

Yet another, though very much smaller, one of Rowland's achievements within the district is his 1925 Bankers Trust Building. This is another fine example of the

application of Romanesque – or, as the *AIA Guide to New York City* terms it, “Romano-Byzantine” – styling to a bank building popularized by York & Sawyer’s Bowery Savings Bank. The Bankers Trust, despite its street-corner site rather than Bowery’s mid-block location, displays the column-framed arch and low arcaded story above broadly reminiscent of York & Sawyer’s widely emulated building. Detroit retains numerous smaller-scale commercial buildings that, dating primarily from the 1920s, display wonderfully decorative terra-cotta trim despite the lack of any local company that produced it. Rowland’s Bankers Trust, with its feast of intricate terra-cotta ornament – some of it perhaps Italian in inspiration but most probably the invention of fertile minds – is one of the best examples.

- **Minoru Yamasaki (1912–1986)** - Seattle-born architect Minoru Yamasaki first worked at New York City firms including those of Wallace Harrison and Raymond Loewy, and then while he was with the firm Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, began working on the Detroit Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. It was Detroit’s first curtain wall structure. The eight-story Annex building brought downtown Detroit’s architecture into the Modern era. Of exceptional significance to the Financial District is the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company’s building at the northwest corner of Woodward and Jefferson avenues. Completed in 1963, it was designed by Yamasaki when he was running his own practice. The building rises from a marble platform to a height of thirty-two stories. Yamasaki used many design elements, materials, and features in the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company building that he later used in the World Trade Center Buildings in New York City.

Art

The Financial District’s buildings and grounds display a variety of sculptural and decorative art that contributes strongly to its overall distinction and historic and cultural significance. Several of the district’s largest towers are themselves works of art in their lavish use of fine materials and their displays of architectural ornament.

Detroit architectural sculptor Corrado G. Parducci (1900-81) was responsible for much of the sculpture and architectural decoration in a number of the district’s buildings. Born in Italy, Parducci arrived in New York in 1904. Sponsored to art school by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney), he later attended the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design and the Art Students League. Parducci worked for Donnelly & Ricci in Perth Amboy, NJ, about 1915, then for Ulysses Ricci when that firm split up, and finally with Anthony DiLorenzo, who had been associated with Ricci. By the early 1920s Albert Kahn had become familiar with their work and, Parducci stated, would commission DiLorenzo’s firm for architectural ornamentation with the understanding that Parducci would do the work. Sent by DiLorenzo to Detroit in 1924, Parducci was soon overwhelmed by the work coming his way. After about eight months, in mid-1925 he separated from DiLorenzo and opened his own studio in Detroit.

Unlike other Detroit architects who furnished full-size drawings of the architectural ornament to the firms that would execute it, Kahn’s office relied on the DiLorenzo firm and Parducci to design the ornament and didn’t furnish such drawings. Kahn discussed

with Parducci the appropriate subject matter and type of detailing and Parducci produced models that Kahn almost always approved the first time around. Other Detroit architectural firms soon recognized the economy of this approach. Parducci modeled the sculpture and architectural ornament for a huge number of buildings and other projects in Detroit, southern Michigan, and beyond down almost to his death.

Kahn's 1924-25 Security Trust and First State Bank Buildings, 735 and 751 Griswold, exhibit fine examples of Parducci's work in the Romanesque and Greco-Roman idioms. In the 1930 Standard Savings Building, 1 Griswold, the entry's bronze doors and grillwork as well as the carved stone entry lintel, window spandrels, and roofline detailing were all modeled by him. For the 1932-34 Federal Building, Parducci's work included designing the eight mid-level relief panels, each forty feet long by eight feet tall.

The ornament about the base of the 1925 Buhl Building and in the third, 1927-29 Penobscot Building was designed by Parducci in concert with Wirt Rowland, the buildings' primary designer. The lower stories of Penobscot's exterior display sculptural decorations in granite that, as a booklet published at the time of the building's completion explain; "are symbolic of the American Indian, recalling the Penobscot Indians for whom the structure is named." These include a dramatic Indian figure atop the four-story entrance arch facing Fort Street; reliefs of birds, beasts, and Indian warriors; a frieze picturing a treaty between white settlers and Indians; and allegorical figures of Commerce, Industry, and Prosperity on the exterior and bronze elevator doors and columns and piers depicting representations of Indians and a marble panel above the lobby mail box with allegorical figures illustrating "Progress of the Mails."

Parducci and Rowland, along with Mary Chase Stratton of Detroit's Pewabic Pottery and other artists, collaborated to make the Union Trust (Guardian) Building the stunning Art Deco architectural and artistic achievement it is. In addition to its rich display of contrasting colors and forms, the exterior displays stone figures flanking the main entrance symbolic of Safety and Security. A central figure of Aviation (symbolic of Progress) is surrounded by symbols – a beehive (thrift and industry), eagle (money), and caduceus (authority and commerce). The recessed entry itself is capped by a semidome finished with brightly colored Pewabic tiles. Inside the building features a glass mosaic in the entrance lobby and large mural depicting a map of the state of Michigan in the banking lobby by artist Ezra Winter. The elevator doors, railings, teller cages and security gates were finished in Monel metal. Most stunning in the main lobby is the ceiling made of Rookwood tiles, and the vaulted banking lobby ceiling of colorful geometric stencil work executed by the Thomas DiLorenzo Company on horsehair plaster.

Corrado Parducci may also have been involved in creating the lavish Romanesque ornament of Wirt Rowland's Bankers Trust Building.

Parducci's one-time boss and associate, New York-based architectural sculptor Ulysses A. Ricci (1888-1960), also modeled sculptural ornament for at least one building within the district, the 1925 Detroit Free Press Building. Born in New York, Ricci apprenticed

at a terra-cotta works in Perth Amboy, NJ, in 1902-06 and studied at Cooper Union Institute and the Art Students League in the 1909-12 period before opening his own studio in 1914. He partnered with Angelo Zari from 1917 to 1941 and then practiced on his own until his death. One of Ricci and Zari's important commissions was for the Romanesque-inspired ornament in stone and bronze on the exterior and interior of York & Sawyer's 1923 Bowery Savings Bank Building, 110 E. 42nd Street, New York. This work included playful figures that became a Ricci and Zari trademark – so much so that this kind of work became known as “Boweryesque.” Some of Ricci's work consisted in carving designs by others. Some of his work in Washington, D. C., the c. 1930 eagle pediment and Neoclassical relief panels at Constitution Hall and 1935 medallions for the Departments of the Interior, Justice, and Agriculture in the National Archives building, followed designs prepared by others – the Constitution Hall work designs by the building's architect, John Russell Pope, and at the National Archives designs by sculptor James Earle Fraser. But others, such as his 1934 relief panels, “Pharmaceutical” and “Light and Hope,” at the American Institute of Pharmacy Building in Washington, may be more characteristic of his work in being carved from his own designs.

As noted above in connection with Corrado Parducci, Albert Kahn was one such architect who trusted to the instincts of sculptural modelers such as Parducci and Ricci. For Kahn's Free Press Building, Ricci provided a wealth of ornament – Romanesque detailing around the arched main entry; piers decorated with owls, snails, pelicans, sea horses, lizards, and snakes flanking the main entry, with figures of goddesses representing Commerce and Communication flanking the arch above them; eight reliefs of well known journalists (and others not known for a journalistic connection) on the front; and reliefs of a variety of forms of transportation on the sides.

In designing the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company headquarters building, architect Minoru Yamasaki also planned a formal garden setting, with small reflecting pools, in which the tower is centered on its small square block in the heart of the downtown at Woodward and Jefferson avenues. To complement the tall and narrow, gracefully elegant MichCon Building, Yamasaki commissioned Italian artist Giacomo Manzù to create *Passo di Danza* (Dance Step), “a graceful nude dancer on toe, her hands lifted over her head to uncoil her hair, which further elongates her lithe silhouette. She is placed on a lozenge-shaped, tapered base that functions as a fountain.” This is one of two sculptures for Detroit projects Yamasaki commissioned from Manzù, the other being his 1968 *Nymph and Fawn* in front of Yamasaki's McGregor Memorial Conference Center at Wayne State University:

LIST OF BUILDINGS – Streets are listed in alphabetical order ignoring East and West. All properties are identified by their historic (original) names. All are CONTRIBUTING unless otherwise stated.

West Congress Street

140-150 West Congress – New Penobscot Building – Steel-frame twenty-four-story skyscraper faced with granite and terra cotta (1916). Donaldson & Meier architects.

Fronting eighty feet on West Congress Street, this second phase of the Penobscot Building was constructed as the New Penobscot Building. It extends back from West Congress to meet the original Penobscot Building on West Fort Street at the alley. The West Congress and eastern (alley) façade display a Renaissance-inspired decorative scheme. The street front is faced in gray unpolished granite in the five-story base and in light-hued terra cotta in similar coursed ashlar finish (but smaller blocks) above. The lower part of the façade contains broad triple windows, some with transoms. The side and upper front facades contain vertical banks of paired double-hung windows. A tall attic is capped with a projecting cornice with boldly oversized brackets and modillions and a dentil band. The West Congress entrance is located between two retail spaces' display windows and, inside, retail shops line the West Congress level entrance hallway. The upper four stories are delineated from the others by running bands of terra cotta, blind reliefs, corbelled details and the cornice. The roof is flat. The western building façade (alley façade) is faced in yellow common brick. The western façade is divided by a light court that allows for additional corner offices and greater ventilation. The building retains its original wood double hung windows.

155 West Congress – Murphy Building – Steel-frame six-story brick and terra cotta commercial building (1903). The building was constructed for businessman Simon J. Murphy both to house manufacturing enterprises to whom space would be rented and, in the basement, a steam power and heating plant that would not only power the building's uses but also provide steam heating for a substantial part of the business district. The red brick façade of the Late Victorian building is divided into six bays marked by broad piers in the second to fifth stories and large brackets in the bracketed and modillion main cornice. In those stories the two end bays contain paired windows on each floor, while the four inner bays each contains a triple set of double hung windows. At the fifth floor level a shallow segmental arch with keystone caps each window bay, and a decorative metal detail was placed at each pier between the arches. A denticulated terra cotta belt course separates the fifth and sixth stories. The windows in the sixth story are double-hung segmental-arch-head singles. The roof is flat. The first floor retains its basic configuration, with an entry in the center of the left-hand five bays and an arched entry at the right, but the finishes are non-original and include mid-twentieth century grey granite bulkheads and center entrance surround. The western entrance, once that of a restaurant called the London Chop House, is finished in white marble panels surrounding a large inset arched entranceway. During a renovation, the Murphy and adjoining Telegraph Building were joined together to share a continuous floor plate and elevator core. The building was constructed for Simon J. Murphy and originally known as the Murphy Power Building. It initially housed a small power plant in the basement that provided power for business operations renting space in the building and also electric power and steam heating for buildings in a nearby service area. The 1903 directory shows the building then housing shoe and cigar manufacturing operations in addition to printing businesses. Succeeding directories through the later 1910s list primarily printing and publishing businesses.

205 West Congress – Bankers Trust Co. Building – Steel-frame two-story bank building faced in terra cotta (1925). Wirt Rowland, chief designer, Smith, Hinchman &

Grylls, architects. A small building with façade on both West Congress and Shelby and an angled entry facing the intersection, Bankers Trust displays a highly elaborate Italian Romanesque decorative scheme fashioned of buff-color terra cotta above a low buff granite base. The building is finished with massive arches containing windows in both facades. Flanking the arched corner entrance, two dark green marble columns support lions holding shields. The building has a flat roof. The original bronze window frames remain in place. In two of the original windows, original green marble panels are still in place in the center of the windows. The low second story is finished with an arcaded treatment that uses columns in a variety of designs. The columns, their capitals, the wall surfaces and cornice above and the wall behind the arcade are resplendent in detailing that leaves no surface there uncovered. The upper story windows that occupy the central pair of arches aligned over the arches below contain three-over-three original metal windows. The arches above the windows are also blind, filled with elaborate carving. The corner doorway once featured a revolving door, now removed, but the elaborate bronze outer door remains. The interior has been rebuilt various times as uses changed from the bank to a brokerage, and then a McDonalds during the early 1990s. It is currently used as a nightclub. The current owner recently added bronze lettering over the doorway, “Bankers Trust Company,” as a tribute to the historic past of the building.

220 West Congress – Noncontributing in its present exterior finish – Steel-frame five-story brick office building. Rectangular in plan, this former glove factory was completely refaced and renovated in the 1970s and no historic finishes are evident. Blue and cream-colored metal panels cover the street façades with dark plate glass windows aligned between the panels and a recessed entrance.

243 West Congress – Marquette Building – Steel-frame ten-story brick and terra cotta commercial office building. (1906, 1916). It fronts 150 feet on West Congress Street and 120 feet on Washington Blvd. Large windows on all four sides of the building allowed light and air for work purposes. The building is faced with red brick, and even retains its original first floor brickwork. A bulkhead of cast stone runs around the base of the building, and at the end of piers it is formed into column bases and plinths. A running band of beige terra cotta divides the second and third floors as well as the third and fourth floors. It is apparent that a running band or cornice was removed from between the eighth and ninth floors. The tenth-floor windows have round-arch heads and terra-cotta keystones. The windows are all two-over-two aluminum replacement windows. All the windows have a sill of white terra cotta. The cornice is a simple band of terra cotta. The roof is flat. Above the entrance doors on both the West Congress and Washington façades the name “Marquette Building” is applied in metal lettering.

Like the 1903 Murphy Building to the east, this building was also built for the Simon J. Murphy interests and also initially bore the Murphy Power Building label. It was built in part to replace the 1903 building in providing electric power and steam heat to the nearby section of the downtown, since directories after 1907 list only it as housing the Murphy Power Company. The basement power plant also powered the Murphy Storage & Ice Company ice plant and cold storage – including a fur storage – that occupied part of the building. The Detroit Edison Company bought out the Murphy Power Company in 1914

and the storage and ice operation moved elsewhere and soon disappeared. With substantial renovations the building acquired the Marquette name about 1916. Although it was advertised in 1916 as offering space for small manufacturing operations, it soon became an office building. As built, the building displayed tall round-head windows in the first-second and fourth-fifth stories that may have fronted the spaces containing the generating equipment. A tall smokestack rose along the alley side. As part of the c. 1916 renovations large square-head windows in each story replaced the round-arch ones.

West Fort Street

131 West Fort – Penobscot Building – Steel-frame thirteen-story brick, limestone and terra cotta building (1905-06). Donaldson and Meier, architects. The first of three Penobscot Buildings, this Renaissance-inspired office building has a frontage of 100 feet on West Fort Street, and originally only extended back one hundred feet to the alley behind it. In 1916 it was joined to an addition – the New Penobscot Building directly behind (south) that faces West Congress Street. In 1928 the third and final addition accessed the original building from a staircase on the eastern property line. The first three stories of the building’s front are faced in a rusticated limestone and the seven stories above in red brick. The upper three stories are faced in cream-colored terra cotta. The façade is divided into five bays of paired double-hung windows. The eleventh and twelfth story façades are slightly recessed behind Corinthian column-detailed piers that separate the bays. The twelfth-story windows are round-arched and display corbel keystones flanked by swag details. The thirteenth or attic story is punctured by deeply recessed paired windows. The original cornice is intact. The building has a flat roof. The west side façade of the building is faced in yellow brick, and an undulating façade allows for corner offices with windows on two walls. The windows are the original wood frame double hung.

This and the subsequent two buildings also bearing the Penobscot name were all built for the Simon J. Murphy interests. Upon the building’s 1906 completion, the Detroit Savings Bank occupied the first floor’s west half, the Detroit Trust Company the east half.

151 West Fort – State Savings Bank – Steel frame, two-and-a-half-story Neoclassical bank building faced in white marble (1900, 1914). 1900 half fronting on West Fort designed by McKim, Mead & White; 1914 rear addition south to West Congress designed by Donaldson & Meier. National Register of Historic Places, State of Michigan Historic Marker, City of Detroit Historic District. This is the only Michigan building designed by McKim, Mead & White. The West Fort Street façade is divided into three bays, the two side bays featuring tall rounded arches. The center bay’s recessed entrance is marked by two fluted Ionic columns. The classical cornice is topped by a central cartouche flanked by two female figures. The spacious interior is well-lit due to a broad west-facing arcade of bronze framed windows. The 1914 addition is so faithful in design to the original that it is difficult to detect where it begins. The building shares its eastern property line with the 1905 and 1916 Penobscot Buildings. The West Congress Street façade is also divided into three bays, with one for the center entrance. However, the entrance is a simple recessed street-level doorway, and the bronze frame windows above

are flanked by pilasters. The building has a double hipped roof. At a mid-century date, a second-story pedestrian bridge was installed over Shelby Street connecting the State Savings Bank building to the building at 607 Shelby. A State of Michigan historic marker is displayed on the Shelby Street façade.

The State Savings Bank was established in 1883 by Kentucky capitalists David Hamilton and T. S. Anderson. In 1907 it merged into the Peoples State Savings Bank, established in 1872 by Francis Palms and other Detroit investors. Peoples failed in 1933 and the building stood empty until 1944 when the Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit occupied the building. Manufacturers moved out in 1977. Since then the building has housed commercial and office operations.

160 West Fort – Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Detroit Branch – Comprised of two attached and interconnected steel-frame structures: a three-and one-half-story marble-faced Neoclassical bank building standing at the Congress corner and an eight-story International Style Annex extending east along West Fort (1926-27, 1949-51, 1951-53). Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, architects for 1926-27 building; Minoru Yamasaki, architect for 1949-51 expansion and 1951-53 renovation of 1926-27 building. National Register of Historic Places. The original building stands on the sidewalk line at the Fort/Shelby intersection, and the front of the eight-story Annex is set back from the front of the 1926 building behind a thirty-foot deep landscaped plaza. The Annex is an International Style curtain wall structure faced with alternating horizontal bands of tinted green glass and white marble panels supported by a stainless steel grid. The Annex contains the first-floor entrance to the banking area and office lobby. A plaza and raised planting beds in front of the Annex were planned to provide rare green space downtown. The floor plates of the two buildings are aligned, the original building's interior having been gutted and converted to three stories to align with the floor plan of the Annex when the Annex was built. The fourth floor of the original building was completely demolished and a penthouse atop it projecting from the Annex provides space for a cafeteria, meeting rooms and a terrace. Both buildings have flat roofs.

201 West Fort – Detroit Trust Co. Building – Steel-frame two-and-a-half-story bank building faced in limestone (1915, 1925-26, 1964). Albert Kahn, Inc., architect. The original bank building, constructed in 1915, occupied a site at the corner of Shelby and West Fort Street. Ten years later, the same architect, Albert Kahn, was hired to greatly expand the building, adding one hundred feet (two-thirds of the present West Fort Street frontage) to the west. The Neoclassical building features slightly projecting end units flanking a broader recessed central section, each part below a one-story attic fronted by a shallow portico displaying massive fluted Corinthian columns between matching piers – two columns in the end sections and four in the central. A full attic story with plaques of foliated details set between paired windows and an upper cornice and setback parapet wall tops the facade. The building was thoroughly modernized in 1964 when the Detroit Bank and Trust expanded into the new 211 West Fort tower next door (the two buildings are connected by an enclosed hallway near West Fort Street). The front between the columns was rebuilt with the original bronze windows and spandrel panels replaced with dark brown plate glass held in place by steel frames and the original doors replaced with new steel frame revolving doors. The building occupies part of the site of Fort Shelby,

and on its Shelby Street façade is displayed a State of Michigan historic marker describing Fort Shelby's history.

The Detroit Trust Company was established in 1900. Its first board of directors contained prominent businessmen from around the state including Theodore De Long Buhl, Ammi W. Wright, James E. Davidson, and lumbermen Henry Stephens, Rasmus Hanson, Frank W. Eddy, and John H. Avery. The firm moved into the corner unit of this building from the nearby first Penobscot Building in 1915 and expanded it in 1925-26. The bank merged with the Detroit Bank (former Detroit Savings Bank) in the 1950s to form the Detroit Bank & Trust Co. When the bank occupied the lower floors in the new building at 211 W. Fort, they kept this building as banking quarters but modernized it. It remains an office of Comerica (the bank's name changed from Detroit Bank & Trust in 1982).

211 West Fort – Detroit Bank & Trust Tower – Steel frame twenty-eight story skyscraper (1963-64). Harley, Ellington, Cowin & Stirton, Inc., architects. This very large building fills the rectangular west half of a block bounded by West Fort on the north, Washington Blvd. on the west, and West Congress on the south. A box in form, it is faced with precast concrete frames outlining floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows that give a grid pattern to the building façades. The ground floor is set back beneath an arcade at ground level and the top of the building displays a two-story tall mechanical housing that fills out the box form. The building has a flat roof. The building is set back from West Fort Street to provide space for raised planting beds. The building connects to the historic Detroit Trust Company building at 201 West Fort Street.

Detroit Bank & Trust occupied the lower floors of this building as its headquarters from 1964 until the early 1990s.

Griswold Street

1 Griswold (originally 409 Griswold) – Standard Savings Building – Steel-frame eight-and-a-half-story Neoclassical office building sheathed in limestone (1930). Corrado G. Parducci, sculptor. This structure fills the lot line at Griswold and West Jefferson's northwest corner. Originally built for the Standard Savings Bank, this building stands on a historic site documented by a historical marker as the site of Detroit's founding and the location of the first Ste. Anne's Church in 1701 – the city and Detroit's oldest church both founded by French explorer Antoine Cadillac. The building's windows are arranged in a grid pattern, five bays on the Griswold façade and twelve on the West Jefferson façade. The original windows have been replaced with single pane aluminum windows. The first floor lobby is a story-and-a-half tall, creating a pedestal for the building. On each side of the recessed main entrance door on Griswold, a black granite fluted Doric column stands to designate the entrance. The door is protected by original decorative metal gates, and a matching metal grill covers the transom window above the door. A two-sided chrome corner clock was added to the building in the middle of the century. The roof is flat. On the roof of the building is signage for the previous tenant, the Raymond James brokerage.

500 Griswold – Union Trust (Guardian) Building – Steel-frame forty-story skyscraper faced in brick, terra cotta and granite (1927-29) – Wirt C. Rowland of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, architects. Corrado G. Parducci, sculptor. National Historic Landmark. Later named the Guardian Building, this skyscraper is finished in an exotic blend of Art Deco, Mayan and Native American motifs. The footprint of the building fills the lot line of a narrow half-length of a north-south city block. The tower at the Griswold (north) end raises forty stories, the remainder of the building to thirty-two stories. Chief designer Wirt Rowland used fine brickwork and colorful terra cotta on the exterior to explore a new form of skyscraper. The theme of the stepped arch is repeated on the exterior and interior of the building. The different roof levels are flat. A semi-circular dome of Pewabic tiles marks the Griswold Street entrance. The base of the exterior is sheathed in red granite, the second and third stories in yellow Mankato stone. Above the third story, the building is faced in a custom-made dark orange brick, given the name “Guardian Brick.” Colorful terra-cotta details at the windows and setbacks draw the eye upward to the tower. Two relief figures designed by Corrado G. Parducci symbolizing Safety and Security also mark the entrance. Incised on the West Congress façade is the year 1928. The lobby rises to a great vault of Rookwood tile in green, red, buff and blue with the space being dramatically lit by tall arched windows. The main banking room is reached via a divided flight of red Nubian marble stairs, through a screen of Monel metal. The main banking room is lit by arched windows along the east and west façades. The central feature of the banking room is a mural map of Michigan designed by artist Ezra Winter.

The Union Trust Company, established in 1891 under the then newly adopted Michigan Trust Act, had the building constructed. Initially it housed the National Bank of Commerce, Union Trust, and Union Title & Guaranty Co. in the lower fourteen stories. Among other early tenants, the offices of Robert O. Derrick, Inc., architects, were on the thirty-sixth floor. By 1930 Union Trust became the Union Guardian Trust and the building became the Union Guardian Building. The Union Guardian Trust Company and its parent holding company, the Guardian Detroit Union Group, failed in 1933.

535 Griswold – Buhl Building – Steel-frame twenty-six-story skyscraper faced in terra cotta and granite (1925) – Wirt C. Rowland of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, architect. Corrado G. Parducci, sculptor. Located at the southwest corner of Griswold and West Congress Streets. The first four stories of the building have a rectangular footprint that fills the lot line. The plan of the upper office floors (floors five through twenty-six) is in the form of a Greek cross. The services and elevators extend upward through the center of the cross, and short hallways radiate in all directions. This cruciform arrangement allows every office to have an outside window, along with eight corner suites on each floor. The flat roof has two levels. A large central elevator service penthouse rises two additional stories above the building’s gabled roofline. The exterior is a mixture of Romanesque and Gothic details all cast from models provided by sculptor Corrado Parducci. The exterior is faced in cream-colored terra cotta blocks. An outstanding feature is the Griswold Street entrance, set back into an arched recess decorated with Romanesque carving and a mosaic-tiled ceiling. A private businessman’s club, the

Savoyard Club, was intended for the twentieth floor. The current windows are double-hung aluminum windows, replacements of the originals.

615 Griswold – Ford Building – Steel-frame eighteen-story office building faced in white terra cotta (1907-08) – D. H. Burnham & Company, architects. The square property site at the northwest corner of Griswold and West Congress Streets is fully occupied. The fenestration pattern of vertical banks of paired double-hung windows is identical on both the Griswold and West Congress façades. The building contains a light court through the alley (rear) façade in order to allow more light and air to interior offices. On the Griswold Street entrance, an overhanging marquee extends over the sidewalk. The terra cotta building façade is broken by bands running above and below the third floor. At the eighteenth floor, the top windows are arched. The seventeenth story is divided from the floors below by a band of terra cotta. The building displays Neoclassical detailing including a two-story base with piers and Ionic columns around a central entry and a two-story attic with piers supporting arches that span the uppermost window bays. The roof is flat, although a large elevator penthouse is located in the center of the building toward the Griswold side of the roof.

Toledo, Ohio, glass manufacturer Edward Ford and his son, John B. Ford, general manager of the Fords' Wyandotte, Michigan, alkali plant, had this building – then Detroit's tallest – constructed as investment property. An article in the March 22, 1908, *Free Press* celebrating the building's approaching completion explained that the Fords turned to investing in Detroit only after becoming disgusted with some Toledo property owners who kept raising prices on them after they agreed to purchase.

645 Griswold – Greater Penobscot Building – Steel-frame forty-seven-story skyscraper faced in granite and terra cotta (1927-29) – Wirt C. Rowland of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, architect. Corrado G. Parducci, sculptor. This is the third and largest component of a cluster of buildings that all bear the Penobscot name (see entries for 131 W. Fort and 140-50 W. Congress). Standing at the corner of West Fort Street and Griswold, the Penobscot building fills the site to the alley to the south. The building is square in plan in its six-story base but then front and back light courts give the upper stories almost to the top an H-shaped form. This structure was the final addition to the Penobscot Buildings, and was the tallest building in Detroit for fifty years. The Indiana limestone walls rise unimpeded to the top of the thirtieth story from a base of gray granite to a series of setbacks that terminate in an apex surmounted by a red neon beacon. Ornamenting the building is a Native American figure rising above the grand, four-story, mahogany granite entrance archway on Griswold Street. Native American figures also decorate the interior in the travertine marble of the main floor lobby and metalwork of the elevator doors. Above the base containing the lobby and shops on the first floor and banking quarters in the first five floors, an H-shaped floor plan accommodates office space. The various roof levels are flat. Dramatic exterior lighting accentuates the tower's upper setbacks at night. The 1928 Penobscot Building connects to the 1905 and 1916 Penobscot Buildings via a hallway and staircase to the west side of the property. In 1929 the building's lower stories housed the Guardian Trust Co., Guardian Detroit Bank, and Guardian Safe Deposit Co., and the offices of the Guardian Detroit Group

holding company. From 1933 to 1944 the Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit occupied the main second-floor banking space.

719 Griswold – Dime Savings Bank Building – Steel-frame twenty-three-story skyscraper faced in white terra cotta (1913-14) – D. H. Burnham & Co. and Graham, Burnham & Co., architects. Renovated by Barton Malow Design (2001). The Dime Building's U-shaped footprint, with the light well opening toward the street, allows natural light into the interior offices. The open end of the U-shape plan facing Griswold Street begins above the third story floor plate. The first two stories were faced in brown granite during a renovation of the 1950s that removed the original terra cotta. Classical details are applied to the terra cotta above the second floor. The two-story lobby has been renovated to include large Corinthian columns and new marble floors. Most impressive was the restoration of the skylight to the light court. The upper three floors are distinguished from the building shaft by a separate treatment of the windows at the sixteenth and seventeenth floors. The windows are grouped between vertical spandrels.

The roof is flat. A new awning projects from the Griswold entrance.

Dime Savings was organized in 1884 with prominent Detroit businessmen such as J. L. Hudson and James E. Scripps among the directors. The bank occupied a temple-front three-story banking room in the center of the Griswold façade between the tower's two arms.

735 Griswold – Security Trust Company – Steel-frame seven-story bank building faced in limestone (1925), with 1964 alterations. Albert Kahn, Inc., architects. Corrado G. Parducci, sculptor. This bank building was constructed between the Dime Building's alley to the south and the First State Bank to the north. Its Romanesque-inspired front is faced in grey Indiana limestone. Rising above a gray granite base, the front displays three four-story tall side-by-side arches. The broad vertical openings are outlined by four-story engaged columns with spiral-patterned shafts and foliated capitols. The columns and their capitals and the arches are finished in limestone elaborately carved with representations of animal and human forms and other motifs. Among the details carved in the voussoir blocks above the arches squirrel and beehive forms – suggestive of saving for the future – are recognizable. A now glassed-in central entry displays a limestone surround carved with vines and foliage, griffons and pelicans, human figures from classical antiquity, and other motifs, including more beehives.

In 1964 a low gable that topped the façade was removed and replaced by a two-story flat-roof addition faced in white cast concrete panels, with a band of black at the roofline.

Light enters through six banks of narrow upper and lower windows separated by aluminum spandrels on the addition's Griswold front. At the same time the 1925 building's original front windows were replaced with aluminum-trim windows separated by aluminum spandrels and the building's center entrance converted to a window and two new entrances created in the north and south archways. Since the last bank use, the building has housed Olde Discount Corp. stock brokerage, the Lawton School, a private business school, and later the Detroit Public Schools' Jessie C. Kennedy Downtown Adult Education Center.

751 Griswold – First State Bank – Steel-frame four-story bank building faced in limestone (1924-25). Albert Kahn, architect. Corrado G. Parducci, sculptor. This bank headquarters building is designed in a Classical Revival style, faced in grey Indiana limestone, and sited prominently at the corner of Griswold and West Lafayette Streets. This allowed for two façades each finished with three-story engaged, fluted Ionic columns between corner antae supporting a low attic story—two columns on Griswold flanking a central entrance and two more along the West Lafayette façade. The main entrance door surround of Tennessee marble is filled with delicate carvings of animals, urns and foliate details. The original windows, encased in metal frames, still rest between spandrels of bronze and marble. A denticulate entablature separated the fourth floor attic story from the floors below. The fourth floor windows are double hung and grouped in twos, separated by elaborate plaques with classical motifs. The roofline is emphasized by a parapet incised with decorative detailing. The roof is flat. The first floor lobby is a story and-a-half tall.

West Lafayette Street

231 West Lafayette Street-Federal Building/now Theodore Levin U.S. District Court

Steel-frame, ten-story limestone-clad federal courthouse and office building (1932-34). B.V. Gamber of Robert O. Derrick, Inc., architects. Corrado G. Parducci, sculptor. The Levin District Courthouse takes up the entire city block bounded by West Fort Street, Washington Boulevard, West Lafayette Avenue, and Shelby Street. An Art Deco design that contains stylized references to Neoclassicism, the building stands on the site occupied by the previous Federal Building built in the 1890s. Built on a black granite base, the rectangular building has an open central court above the second floor. Fluted pilasters mark the triple recessed entrances. Above the entrance, relief sculptures of eagles and emblems portray the building's governmental functions. Highly stylized large fluted piers also rise through the central portion of the tired to sixth floor façade to support a broad entablature with round sculptural plaques alternating with bands of fluting. The upper three stories below the flat roof are setback slightly from the lower part of the building. The interior is finished in high quality materials such as travertine marble and polished granite and displays plaster detailing that includes fine stencil work. Of particular interest is the U.S. District Courtroom Room 733. It contains the polished walls and other marble features and the mahogany judge's dais and other wood trim and furnishings that came from the former courtroom of Chief District Judge Arthur J. Tuttle in the old federal building. In 1931 when that building was to be demolished for this new structure, Judge Tuttle had his courtroom finish dismantled and reinstalled in his new courtroom.

321 West Lafayette Street-Detroit Free Press Building- Steel-frame fourteen-story office building clad in limestone (1925). Albert Kahn, Inc., architect. Ulysses A. Ricci, sculptor. The building takes up the half city block fronting on Lafayette's south side between Washington Boulevard and Cass Avenue extending south to the alley. The design of the building is unusual in that the first three stories display rectangular floor plates, while two lights courts along the building's rear side give floors four through six

E-shaped footprints. A central front tower area contains floors seven through fourteen. The exterior design was implemented by Albert Kahn for many of his other large office buildings such as the Fisher Building. The piers between window bays brought forward to give the building a dramatic light and shadow play. The building retains its original double hung wood framed windows in many of the offices of the tower. The two-story arched main entrance at the front of the building is guarded by two historical figures. Medallions depicting historical newsmen decorate the building's exterior. For many years, two red neon signs for "The Free Press" stood on the roof of the building, but were removed in the late 1990's. The roof is flat. Inside the first floor, the central lobby features an elaborate arched plaster ceiling with rosette and classical details. A paneled conference room to the east is highlighted by murals by artist Roy C. Gamble depicting the growth of the City of Detroit. Also on the first floor inside the West Lafayette Boulevard façade are a restaurant and other retail spaces. The two basement levels once housed the printing facilities of the newspaper. A State of Michigan historic marker is displayed on the exterior of the building.

West Larned Street

234 West Larned – Four-story brick commercial building with terra cotta and cast stone trim (1882). Standing adjacent to the Fire Department Headquarters on the west and a surface parking lot to the east, this long and narrow building has about thirty feet of frontage on West Larned and extends back 100 feet to the alley behind. The second, third and fourth floors are finished in reddish brick with cast stone lintels and pier capitals. The piers display decorative terra-cotta blocks in the piers above the second and third stories. Old metal fire escapes remain in place in the upper-story front. The cornice has been removed. The windows are arranged in three bays separated by four brick pilasters. The original windows have been replaced with modern double-hung windows. The first floor storefront has been renovated and tiled with a contemporary tile but retains a few historic elements. The part of the building's exposed eastern façade nearest the street displays a painted forty-two-foot square untitled mural. The mural was commissioned by New Detroit, Inc., and is an arrangement of transparent color planes floating on a white background, designed by Detroit artist Charles McGee in 1974.

250 West Larned – Detroit Fire Department Headquarters – Steel-frame, five-story Neoclassical building faced in brick and terra cotta (1929). Hans Gehrke, architect. The long-time home of Michigan's oldest fire department, the massive square headquarters building stands at a site occupied by fire department facilities continuously since about 1840. The footprint of the building, located at the northeast corner of Washington Boulevard and West Larned Street, runs to the alley south of the Marquette Building and, on the building's east façade, to the building at 234 West Larned. The building is clad in dark red brick in a running bond pattern and trimmed in gray-buff terra cotta. A grey granite bulkhead rises about three feet in height. On the West Larned façade the building is divided into six bays, with the four central ones slightly projecting. These central bays contain the arched, terra-cotta-faced portals to four engine bays with deeply recessed double doors. To the engine bays' right (east) is an entrance to the "Fire Headquarters" that displays a classical surround with console bracket-supported cap and, above it, a

shield bearing the DFD initials flanked by angels, one holding an axe, the other a pike. An identical surround in the same location at the façade's opposite end outlines a window. The pedestrian doors are surmounted by terra cotta crests marked "DFD" for Detroit Fire Department. In the entablature above the doors, is engraved the words "Fire Headquarters." The four fire engine doors are outlined by terra-cotta-trimmed arches displaying rope moldings, dentiled lintels, and keystones. A rosette in a circle decorates each spandrel. The first level is a story and-a-half tall to accommodate the fire trucks. A terra-cotta beltcourse separates the first level from the second story above. The banks of windows above are set in closely spaced pairs above the engine bays and singly at the ends. The original wooden double-hung windows are still in place, many containing air conditioning units. Between the second and third stories appears another broad terra-cotta band containing a dentiled cornice. The walls above are demarcated into bays by broad and shallow piers that support a tall terra-cotta entablature with dentiled cornice topped by anthemion cresting. Metal spandrel panels separate the third and fourth-story and fourth and fifth-story windows in the center four bays. The Washington Boulevard façade has much of the same detailing, but there are some differences. There are three engine bays in the center with a large window at either end in the street level of the projecting center section of the façade and an entrance – pedestrian at the right and roll-down vehicular at the left – at either slightly recessed end of the façade. Above the north and south doors are cartouches containing firefighter horns and hats.

Shelby Street

555 Shelby – Merrill Lynch Building – Steel-frame, three-story commercial building faced with stainless steel framework holding aggregate panels and plate glass windows (1960). The rectangular International Style building stands adjacent to the Bankers Trust Building at 205 West Congress. The building's southern side is brick and painted beige. The building was built as an annex to the adjacent building at 205 W. Congress, which at the time housed a Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Beane brokerage.

542 Shelby – Telegraph Building – Steel-frame, six-story office building faced in white glazed terra cotta (1913). The Telegraph Building is located at the southeast corner of West Congress and Shelby Streets, and originally shared a party wall with the Murphy Building to the east. This building's white glazed terra cotta stands out from the red brick and beige terra cotta of the buildings nearby. The exterior walls around the street-level storefronts have been renovated with dark green mica-flecked cast panels up to mid-level and white marble panels above. Today green awnings shelter the shop windows. In the façades above the storefronts vertical "piers" that project only very slightly and low paneled horizontal bulkheads – all faced in terra-cotta blocks – frame the broad square-head windows that occupy nearly the entire space. The frieze below a simply detailed projecting cornice displays five panels corresponding with each window bay, with two small blind round windows centered over each window bay. The windows are arranged in four bays on the West Congress façade and eight on the Shelby façade. Although the windows, each a triple with narrow double-hung at each end flanking a broader double-hung in the center, are replacements, they are designed to look similar to the original Chicago-style windows. The building has a flat roof. The alley façade is faced in white

glazed brick. During a renovation, the Murphy and Telegraph Buildings were joined together to share a continuous floor plate and elevator core. The interiors of both buildings have been completely renovated. Today the combined building is called the Murphy-Telegraph Building. The building originally housed Western Union's Detroit hub plus rental office space.

607 Shelby – U.S. Mortgage Bond Building – Steel-frame, nine-story office building faced in limestone and brick (1924-25). The U.S. Mortgage Bond Building is located at the northwest corner of West Congress and Shelby Streets. It is rectangular in plan, and is adjacent to the building to the west at 220 West Congress, as well as the building at 625 Shelby Street to the north. Faced on the street façades in grey Indiana limestone, the building takes after Italian palazzos in form but seems to mix Neoclassical and Renaissance Revival design elements. Resting on a base of grey granite, the lower stories are faced in grey Indiana limestone set in broad courses with the horizontal joints deeply sunk. The tall arched windows of the first and second floor are set in the original metal frames. A classical cornice of limestone separates the three-story lower section from the smooth-finished limestone upper façades. There are five window bays on the Shelby façade, and six on the West Congress façade. On each façade, the central windows are paired, with a single window on each end bay. The windows have all been replaced with aluminum frame windows. The original modillioned and dentiled cornice remains in place. Sometime in the middle of the 20th century, a pedestrian bridge was built at the second floor level connecting the U. S. Mortgage Bond Building to the State Savings Bank Building across Shelby Street.

625 Shelby – Detroit Fire and Marine Insurance Co. – Steel-frame, two-story limestone and brick structure (1912). Located adjacent to 607 Shelby to the south and an alley to the north, the building is square in plan, with a broad and low front. The building's street and alley façades are faced in Indiana limestone. The Neoclassical building displays broad antae at the front corners and a screen of four unfluted Ionic columns (plus a half-column at each end) between that rests on a low base pierced by basement windows now filled with glass block. The pedimented classical entrance stands between the center two columns. The broad and tall window areas between the columns and above the door are now filled with dark reflective plate glass. An entablature with three-part architrave and a dentiled cornice, topped by a decorative balustrade, spans the façade and continues around the north (alley) side. The north side displays broad piers in place of the front's columns. The interior retains a great deal of original ceiling and wall plaster detailing. Today, signage for Elysium, the nightclub that uses the building, is centered over the door between two columns.

Woodward Avenue

1 Woodward – Michigan Consolidated Gas Company (“MichCon”) Building – Steel-frame, thirty-two-story skyscraper (1960-62). Minoru Yamasaki Associates with Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, architects. Located at the prominent intersection of the northwest corner of West Jefferson Avenue and Woodward Avenue, the MichCon Building is square in plan. The building's entrance staircases, fountain and former water pools lead

up to a platform on which the building rests. The pools were later converted to flower beds. Pre-cast white concrete panels hold the vertical, hexagon-shaped windows in place on this landmark skyscraper. The lobby is a thirty-foot tall space illuminated by eighty-two glass panes on all four sides. The lobby columns and stairs are finished in white marble, and the railings and lobby ceiling details are of polished chrome. The top four floors terminate to a recessed square penthouse that contains the heating, ventilating and cooling systems. Both roofs are flat gravel roofs. At night the top four floors are illuminated by colored lights depending on the season. At the two rooflines, the concrete panels project upward past the roofline for a crenellated effect. A pedestrian bridge at the fifteenth floor connects to the Guardian Building across West Larned Street.

501 Woodward – Detroit Federal Savings and Loan Association – Noncontributing. Steel-frame, five-story glass and steel bank building (1971) – Ted Rogvoy Assoc., architects. This narrow rectangular structure, vacant for the past fifteen years, stands across an alley from the Union Trust (Guardian) Building. Three sides of the façade are faced with reflective plate glass held in place by black metal frames. The base of the structure is comprised of red brick curved down to meet the sidewalk. The building is set back the same distance from Woodward as the former National Bank of Detroit (now Chase) building to the north. It has a flat roof that holds the heating and cooling systems of the Guardian Building, located to the west across the alley.

600 Woodward – Vinton Building – Steel-frame, twelve-story building faced in light grey glazed brick with terra cotta details (1917). Albert Kahn, Inc., architect. George A. Fuller Co., contractor. Already listed in the National Register. The building stands at the northwest corner of Woodward and East Congress and fills out its lot. The two street-facing façades are treated alike, with narrow vertical piers separating banks of single double-hung windows that fill most of those façades. The façades display an Arts-and-Crafts-influenced Commercial Style feeling, but with a modicum of Romanesque-inspired detailing. Terra-cotta spandrel panels contain foliage ornament set in a central lozenge outlined by triangles. The upper row of windows has arched heads. Attenuated twisted columns outlining the façade's edges run up to a shallow gabled treatment with an arcaded cornice above a rosette-decorated frieze. The Vinton name is displayed at the gable-shaped parapet. The roof is flat with the exception of an elevator penthouse and separate equipment storage shed. The alley façade is faced in common brick. The storefront was recently refurbished to something closer to its historic appearance than the former enameled metal panel one.

Robert K. Vinton, secretary-treasurer of the Vinton Company, general contractors, commissioned the building. The Vinton Company was by then Detroit's oldest building firm, founded in 1858 by Walter A. Vinton, Robert's grandfather. The Vinton Company initially had its offices on the eleventh floor of the office building. The Guaranty Trust Company bought the building by 1925 and by the end of the decade occupied the first and second stories. The bank was a casualty of the 1933 bank holiday.

608 Woodward – Martin Limbach Hardware – Masonry, iron and wood-frame, five-story three bay brick commercial building (1877). Rectangular-shaped building located

between the Vinton Building and 612 Woodward to the north originally built for the Martin Limbach Hardware Company. Three window bays divide the common brick façade. The two lowest story windows have cast stone lintels, while the upper two stories windows retain bracketed stone lintels. The shadow of decorative hood molding remains above these windows on the upper two stories. The first floor storefront has been renovated for a deli, and the upper cornice removed.

611 Woodward – National Bank of Detroit (NBD) Building/now Chase Tower – Steel-frame, fourteen-story building (1959) – Albert Kahn Associated Architects and Engineers, Inc., architects. The National Bank of Detroit Building fills the block bounded by Woodward Avenue and Griswold Street between West Fort Street and West Congress. A rectangular-shaped building measuring 281 feet by 130 feet, its entrance doors are on the Woodward side of the property. The Griswold side of the property is the rear of the site, and only one entrance point at the south end of Griswold is accessible. The modern bank headquarters building is finished in a checkerboard curtain wall pattern of white Georgia Cherokee marble panels alternating with rectangles containing square windows outlined above and below by brown porcelain-enamel aluminum panels – the marble and windowed panels outlined in projecting stainless steel ribs. On the first floor the steel spandrel panels are a royal blue color. The building’s upper stories form a box that rests on a taller recessed base surrounded on all sides by a loggia fronted by the outer square columns of the structural system. Structural columns are also spaced throughout the two-story lobby space. On top of the roof is a setback utility floor faced in brown metal louvers housing the heating and cooling system. The roof is flat. The rectangular-shaped building is set back from the street on all sides to create a generous walkway enhanced with planters on all sides. The lobby interior was designed by W. B. Ford Design Associates.

612 Woodward – Traub Jewelry – Masonry, iron and wood-frame four-story three bay brick commercial building (1879, 1911). Rectangular-shaped building between two others on Woodward, it shares a party wall with the building at 616 Woodward. The Woodward frontage is seventeen feet wide. First built for the Traub Jewelry Company when they relocated from East Jefferson Avenue. The building retains its original window openings in the upper two stories. The brick has been painted dark red. The roof is pitched. The lower two levels were renovated in 1911 for the Grand Trunk Railway’s ticket offices. The renovation incorporated a terra cotta rounded arch inset with multi-paned windows on the second floor. The arch contains a crest displaying the initials GT, and an entablature contains the words Grand Trunk. The first floor storefront was recently renovated for Foran’s Grand Trunk Pub.

616 Woodward – Masonry, iron and wood-frame four-story three-bay brick commercial building (1880). This rectangular-shaped building is between two others on Woodward Avenue, and shares a party wall with the building to the south at 612 Woodward. The Woodward frontage is twenty feet wide. The original permit for this building was issued to the W. G. Vinton construction company. This brick building has had a major first floor storefront renovation but the upper story windows still retain the original cast stone lintels and sills. The cornice has been removed, and the original windows likely been

replaced. The roof is pitched. This building housed the Metrople Hotel in the 1930's and 40's.

620 Woodward – Mabley & Company – Two now combined iron and wood-frame four-story brick commercial buildings (1876-80). Silas Farmer's *History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan* (1889) depicts a row of five buildings, with these two at its south end, as the "Clothing, hat, cap and furnishing stores of Mabley & Company, 122 to 134 Woodward Avenue, East side. Built in 1876-1880." The drawing (p. 771) depicts the row topped by a cornice and arched-motif balustrade, with low gabled treatments atop the second store in from each end. Along with all of this roofline ornament, hooded window trim and other detailing is now missing. City permit records indicate a major alteration occurred in 1918. The first floor storefronts have been renovated, and the brick has been painted a cream color.

Farmer (770-73) describes the Mabley & Co. department store as then "the largest retail establishment in Michigan," occupying these five stores plus additional ones directly across Woodward (gone). Nos. 620-30 housed men's and boys' clothing and hats and caps, while the buildings across the streets offered women's clothing, boots and shoes, jewelry, toys, books, pottery, crockery, glassware, etc."

630 Woodward – Mabley & Company – Three now combined iron and wood-frame four-story brick buildings (1876-80), with exterior finish identical to 620, that form the rest of the five-building row once housing the Mabley & Co. department store. C. R. Mabley established the store in 1870 and it was incorporated in 1884. The first floor storefronts have been renovated, the original detailing has been removed, and the brick has been painted a cream color. The roof contains a large skylight.

660 Woodward – First National Bank Building – Steel-frame, twenty-four-story building faced in limestone (1920-22) – Albert Kahn, Inc., architect. The building's plan is shaped to fit in a contorted site that zigzags through the middle of its block, emerging on East Congress' north side at the Bates intersection behind the Vinton Building. The façades fronting on Woodward and Cadillac Square at the building's north end are sheathed in grey granite at the street-level base and in limestone above, while other façades are finished in buff brick. The three façades facing Woodward and Cadillac Square display massive Corinthian porticos *in antis* rising from above the street level up to the fifth-floor level – the porticos on the Cadillac Square and corner Woodward elevations fronting an arched-ceiling banking room, recently renovated. Above the porticos paired windows rise in vertical banks between broad and shallow piers up to a three-story high zone where, below a final story, metal panels replace the limestone spandrels. At the twenty-fourth (attic) floor, the window pairs are separated by decorative details, and there are cartouches marking the ends of each façade. An overscaled classical cornice with modillions and an acroteria band along the roofline have been removed. A portion of the building is constructed over a parking garage that faces Bates Street and East Congress Street. Above the parking garage is office space. The roof is flat. The first floor of the building contains retail store space, while the upper stories were designed for a bank tenant as well as commercial offices.

The First National Bank was established in 1863, shortly after the 1862 passage of the National Banking Act. A Second National Bank, founded shortly after First, with leading Detroit businessmen such as Christian H. Buhl, Eber Brock Ward, and James F. Joy as directors, merged with First National in 1914 as the First and Old Detroit National Bank. The bank occupied its new quarters in February 1922, then shortening its name to First National Bank. The bank went into receivership in 1933.

Criteria: The proposed historic district meets the first, second, third and fourth criteria contained in Section 25-2-2: (1) Sites, building, structures or archeological sites where cultural, social, spiritual, economic, political or architectural history of the community, city, state or nation is particularly reflected or exemplified; (2) Sites, buildings, structures, or archeological sites which are identified with historic personages or with important events in community, city, state or national history; (3) Buildings or structures which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural specimen, inherently valuable as a representation of a period, style or method of construction; (4) Notable works(s) of a master designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

Composition of the Historic Designation Advisory Board: The Historic Designation Advisory Board has nine appointed members and three *ex-officio* members, all residents of Detroit. The appointed members are: Kwaku Atara, Melanie A. Bazil, Robert Cosgrove, Keith A. Dye, Zene' France Fogel-Gibson, Edward Francis, Calvin Jackson, Harriet Johnson and Doris Rhea. The *ex-officio* members who may be represented by members of their staff, are Director of the Historical Department, the Director of the City Planning Commission, and the director of the Planning and Development Department.

RECOMMENDATION: 1The Historic Designation Advisory Board recommends that City Council adopt an ordinance of designation for the proposed historic district. A draft ordinance is attached for City Council's consideration.

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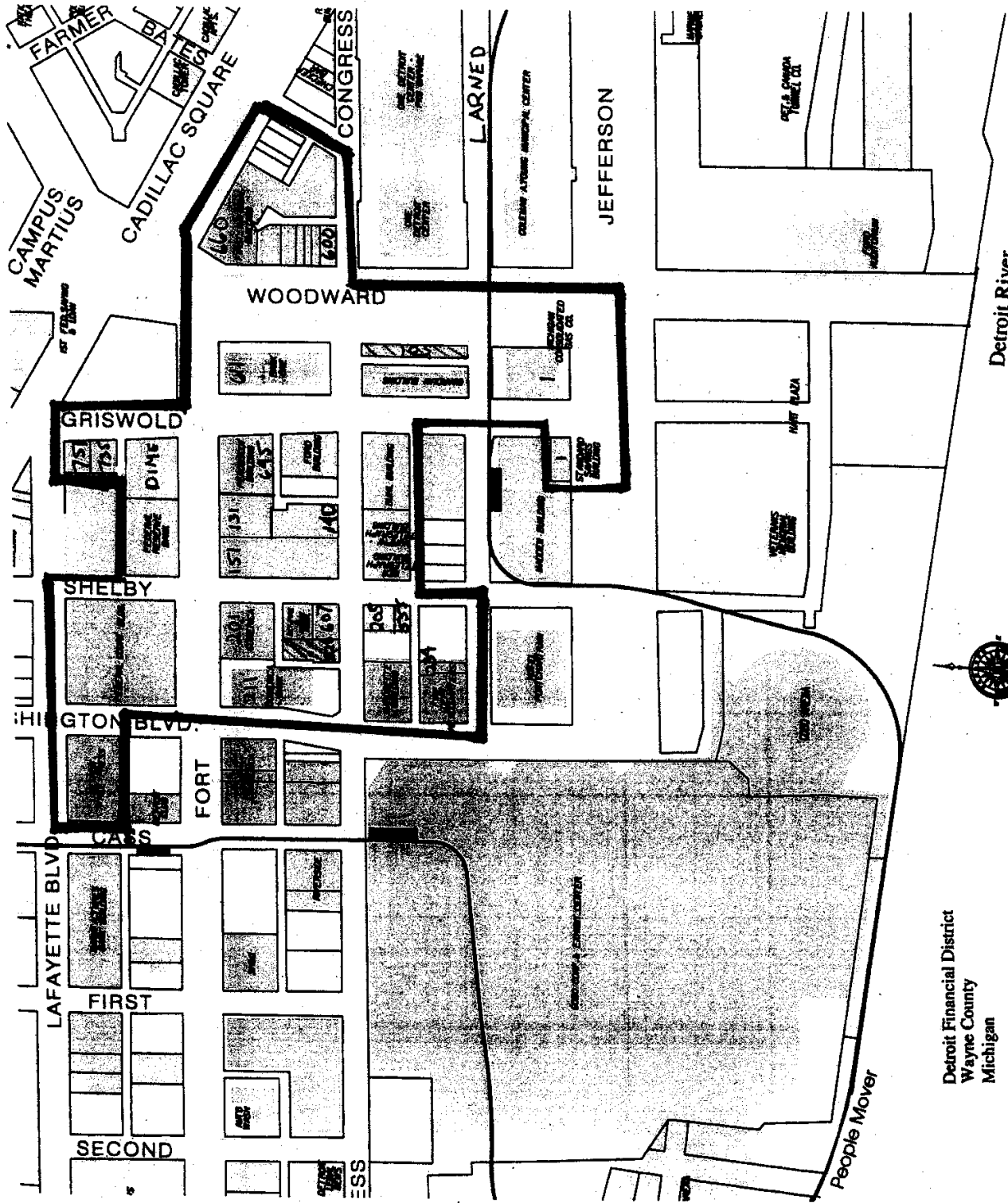
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Noncontributing Buildings

Scale 100'

Detroit Financial District
Wayne County
Michigan

— = District Boundary